PICTURESQUE EGYPT

BY

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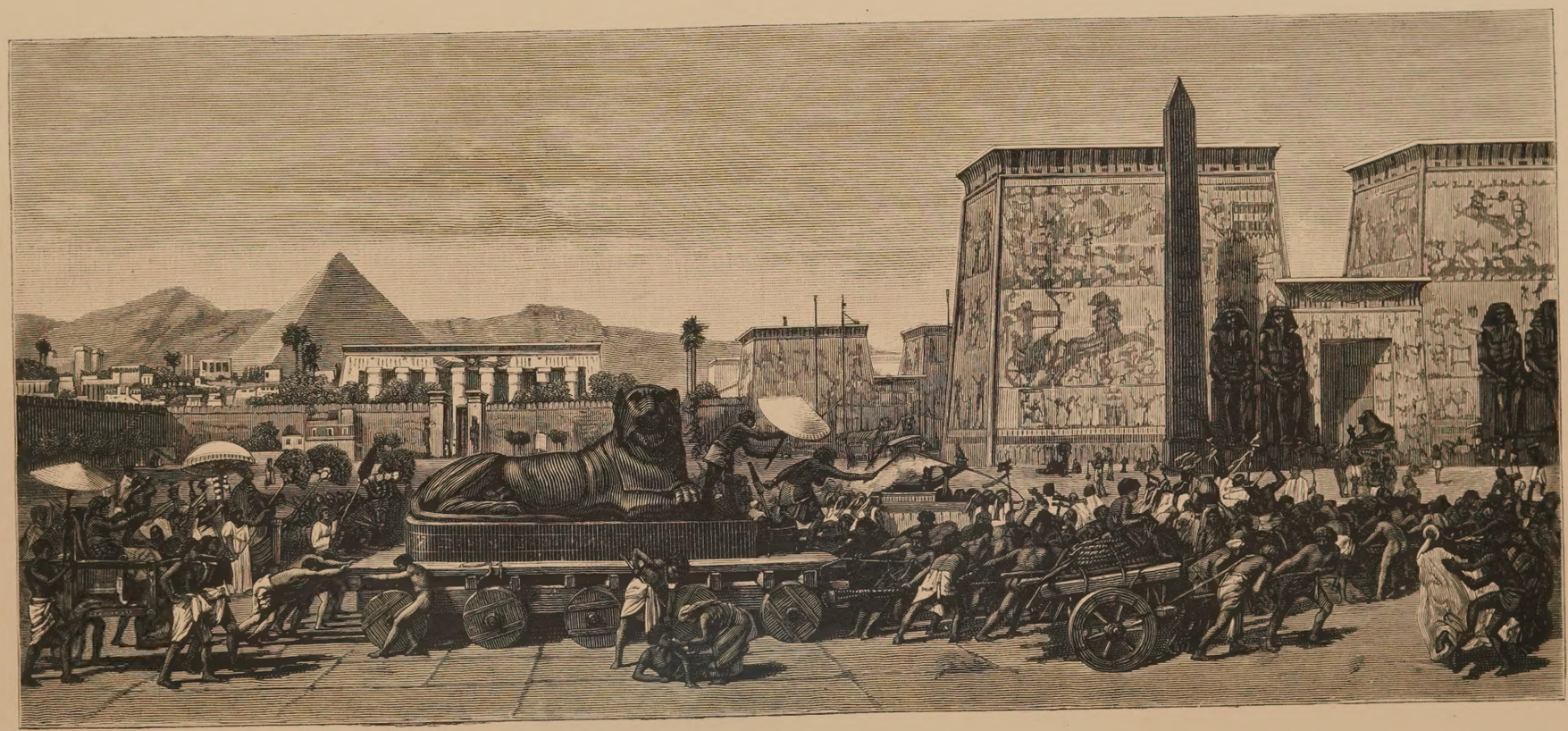

ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

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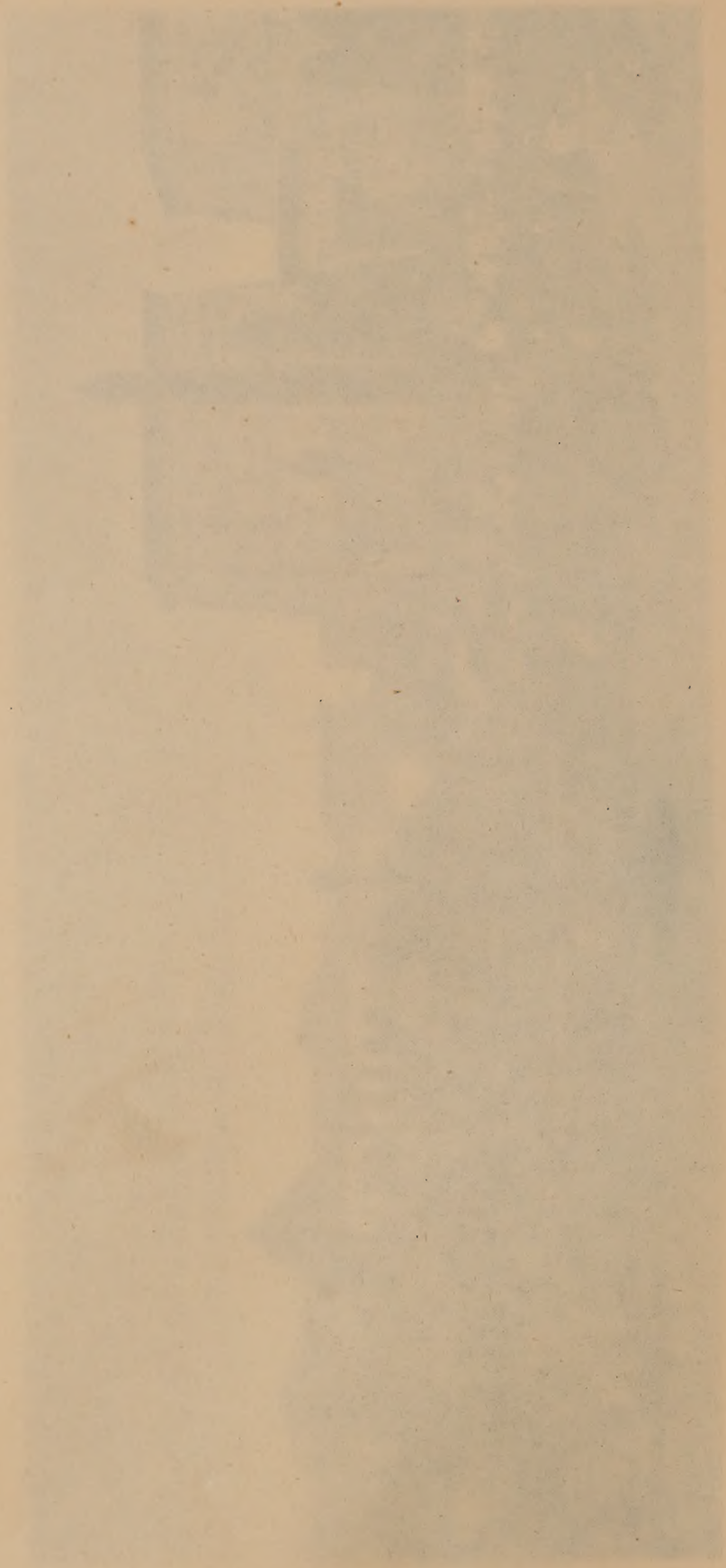

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EGYPT:

DESCRIPTIVE, HISTORICAL, AND PICTURESQUE.

BY

G. EBERS.

Translated from the Original German

BY

CLARA BELL.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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PREFACE.

WHEREIN lies the mysterious attraction which is peculiar to the land of the Pharaohs? Why is it that its name, its history, its natural peculiarities, and its monuments, affect and interest us in a quite different manner from those of the other nations of antiquity?

Not only the learned and cultivated among the inhabitants of the Western world, but every one, high and low, has heard of Egypt and its primeval wonders. The child knows the names of the good and the wicked Pharaoh before it has learnt those of the princes of its own country; and before it has learnt the name of the river that passes through its native town it has heard of the Nile, by whose reedy shore the infant Moses was found in his cradle of rushes by the gentle princess, and from whose waters came up the fat and lean kine. Who has not known from his earliest years the beautiful narrative, which preserves its charms for every age, of the virtuous and prudent Joseph, and heard of the scene of that story—Egypt—the venerated land where the Virgin, in her flight with the Holy Child, found a refuge from His pursuers?

But the Holy Scriptures, which first familiarise us with the land of the Nile

valley, say nothing of its Pyramids and other monuments of human labour, which, apparently constructed to endure for ever, seem as if they were not subject to the universal law of the evanescence of all earthly things. And yet who has not, while yet a child, heard of those monuments, on which the Greeks bestowed the proud name of "Wonders of the World"?

The name "Pyramid" is given to a simple mathematical solid form, which frequently occurs in Nature, and the name was derived from the Egyptian structures which have that form, not *vice versâ*; just as we call any confused and complex arrangement a "Labyrinth," from that magnificent palace, built by Egyptian kings, from whose intricate series of chambers it was difficult to find an issue. Thus, too, "Hieroglyphic" has come to mean any idea veiled by its mysterious mode of exposition—another metaphor derived from the picture-writing of the ancient Egyptians. Every day and every hour, though generally unconsciously, it is true, we have something to do with objects and ideas whose first home was the land of the Pharaohs. The paper on which I write these words owes its name to the Egyptian Papyrus, which was also called Byblos, whence the Greek word Βιβλος and our word Bible. A hundred other current words and ideas might be mentioned whose native land is Egypt, and if it were here possible to go deeper into the matter and to lay bare the very roots of the artistic possessions and learning of the West we should find more and more reason to refer them to Egypt; but we must not in this place linger even at the threshold of this inquiry.

We invite the reader, in these pages, to accompany us to Egypt. Enchanting and quite peculiar it remains to this day, as when Herodotus, the father of history, declared that the valley of the Nile contained more marvels than any other country; and just as the climate of Egypt is exceptional, and the great stream itself differs in character from every other river, so the inhabitants of the land differ in almost every respect from other nationalities, as much in their manners as in their laws.

The Nile with its periodical fertilising overflow, the climate of the country, and many other circumstances, remain just as Herodotus described them, and the lapse of time has had but little effect even to this day in counteracting the influence of the natural peculiarities of Egypt. The customs and laws, it is true, are wholly changed, and only a diligent inquirer can find in those of the present day any relics or records of antiquity.

To the Pharaonic period succeeded the Greek, the Roman, the Christian; and after all these came the dominion of Islam, the unsparing revolutioniser. At the present day a sovereign sits on the throne of Egypt who is striving with success to adapt the forms of European culture to his Mohammedan subjects; but Civilisation, that false and painted daughter of the culture of the West, with her horror of all

individuality and her craving for an ill-considered and monotonous equality, has forced her way into Egypt, and robs the streets and market-places in the villages and towns of the magical charm of their primitive character, sprung of the very soil of the East; she finds her way into the houses, and in place of the old luxurious abundance of space she introduces a meagre utilisation of it; she strips the men of the stately splendour of their flowing robes and decorated weapons; and makes the women covet the scanty draperies and smart clothing of their envied European sisters. The whistle of the steam-engine, as it drives across plain and desert, laughs to scorn the patient strength of the camel and the docile swiftness of the Arab horse; the uniform and arms of the soldiers are made to resemble those of the West more and more. The people's festivals still preserve their peculiar character, but European carriages are beginning to supplant the riding horse, and Egyptian military bands play airs by Wagner and Verdi. In well-appointed Arab houses sofas and cabinets from Europe are taking the place of the divans and beautifully carved or inlaid chests, and coffee is no longer sipped from a "Fingan" of finely chased metal, but from cups of Dresden china. All the stamp and character of the East in great things and small are being more and more destroyed and effaced, and are in danger of vanishing entirely in the course of years.

As yet, however, they have not entirely disappeared; and the artist, as he wanders on through the towns and villages, by streets and houses, under the wide heaven and in the tent, among the magnates and the citizens, the peasants and the sons of the desert, at the solemn occasions of rejoicing or of mourning; as he watches the labours or the repose of the dwellers by the Nile, may still detect forms of antique, various, picturesque, attractive, and characteristic beauty.

Glorious remains of the three great epochs of art—the ancient Egyptian, the Greek, and the Arab—still survive in Egypt. The last, indeed, will endure a little longer; but much of what is most fascinating in the peculiarities of Oriental life will have disappeared within a decade, much even before a lustrum has passed —everything probably by the beginning of the next century.

For this reason the writer of these pages, who knows and loves Egypt well, has with pleasure undertaken the task of collecting all that is most beautiful and venerable, all that is picturesque, characteristic, and attractive, in ancient and modern Egypt, for the enjoyment of his contemporaries and for the edification and delight of a future generation.

Yes! for their delight; for the pictures, which it is his duty to explain in words, are unsurpassed of their kind. Our greatest artists and most perfect connoisseurs of all that the East can offer to the painter's art have produced them

for us, and Egypt is thus displayed not merely as it is, or as it might be represented on the plate of the photographer, but as it is mirrored on the mind of the artist.

In treating of the solemn festivals held by the Cairenes, and of the tales they narrate, Dr. Spitta, of Hildesheim, the librarian to the Khedive, has given much valuable assistance; and Dr. J. Goldhizer, of Buda-Pest, an accomplished and well-known Orientalist, who was himself one of the students in El Azhar, the University of Cairo, has contributed a fine chapter on that centre of Mohammedan life and Mohammedan science in Cairo.

Those who already know Egypt will in these pictures find all that they have seen illuminated by the magic hand of genius; those who hope to visit the Nile valley may learn from these pages what they should see there, and how to see it; and those who are tied to home, but who have a desire to learn something of the venerable sites of antiquity—sacred and profane—of the scene of the "Thousand and one nights," of the art and magic of the East, of the character and life of Orientals, will here find their thirst for knowledge satisfied, and at the same time much to interest them and give them the highest kind of pleasure.

GEORG EBERS.

Leipsic, 1878.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

I have had the advantage of the assistance of Dr. Edward Meyer, long a resident in the East, in the orthography of the Arabic words and names that occur in this Work. The vowels are pronounced as follows:—A as in ant; aw as in jaw; ee as in seen; ey as in skein; i as in sin; oo as in boot; y (consonant) as in yet.

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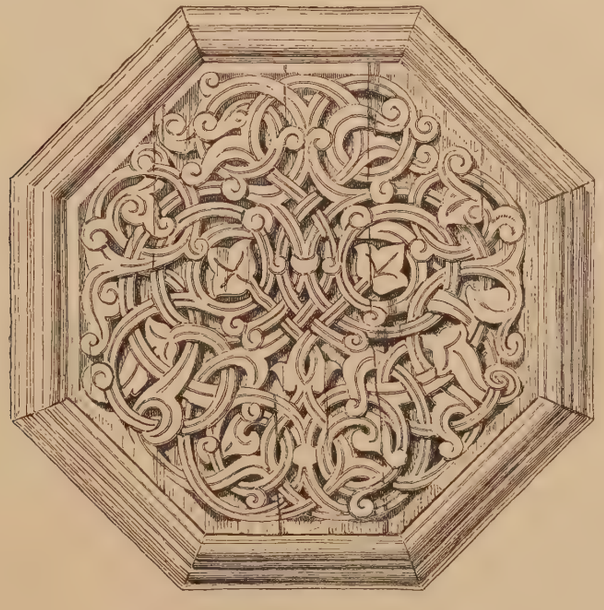

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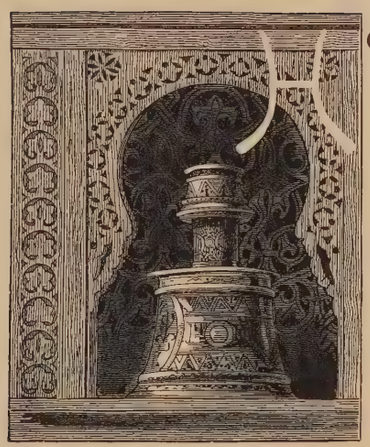
Introduction.



OW often has that wonderful land—the subject of the present work—been visited and described, from the time of Herodotus in the sixth century before Christ to the nineteenth after! What numerous narratives of its history, its monuments, its physical condition, and its political state, have flowed from a thousand pens! How many eyes have scrutinised its remotest nooks, with a view to its condition—past, present, and future! What, after all, is Egypt—the gift of the river, the products of the Nile, the bed of that old serpent of the waters, varying with the change of season, broad in winter, narrow in summer, by turns sheeted with water like a lake, or the slimy dark alluvial of a marsh, or else verdant with vegetation, or yellow with the harvest—the granary of the Old World, the cotton, tobacco, and indigo field of modern times, with its five millions of acres of cultivable land and its four millions and a half of population, with a river of fifteen hundred miles for its highway, at the edge of the Libyan Desert, close to the Red Sea, remote from the Atlantic, bathed on its north coasts by the Mediterranean, clinging to Asia by an isthmus, which, now divided by the thin streak of a canal, makes Africa a gigantic island? Egypt, too—the result of the outpour of the great African lakes—the reservoirs of the tropical rains—with its rainless sky, its tropical climate, has from times remote had the charm of historical recollections—the first cradle of the human race, the earliest

evolution of civilisation, the oldest theatre on which the great drama of mankind was played, with all its shifting scenes and startling incidents. To Egypt also point the arts and sciences as the cradle of their earliest infancy: sculpture, architecture, and painting, there first started forth from small beginnings; literature there began; and religion, the mental bond of civilised communities, there sprang into life, with all its Protean phases of polytheistic forms.

Whence came the first man who trod its alluvial plain? Was he a rude savage, clad with skin, and equipped for the chase with implements of stone, to do battle with the hippopotamus and the crocodile, with which the stream and its estuaries abounded, or to spear the African lion, hunt the howling hyæna, or shoot the countless flocks of birds of the banks of Nile? Came he as a Nigritic wanderer, from Equatorial Africa, from the fringe of the Libyan coast, or from the Semitic races beyond the Suez isthmus? Was he an aboriginal—some type of mankind which, blended with all sorts of races, has melted away and left no representative except some occasional and abnormal form, such as Nature throws out from time to time like a recurrent thought in the cosmic mind, some dim recollection of a vanished past? The long duration of civilisation has cleared away, even from the preserving valley of the Nile, nearly all the evidences of palæothetic ages or neolithic remains, although here and there fragments attest the use of stone prior to the employment of metal, but so rare as to cast shadows of doubt on the existence of prehistoric man.

This Egypt, whose tradition recounts the reign of gods and demi-gods, first gives evidence of its existence by its Pyramids—those tombs of geometric form which prove the highest knowledge of the exactest of the human sciences, raised with wonderful care, and evincing unrivalled knowledge of the principles of construction. They show an enormous population, a long antecedent period of human experience, and a development of technical skill in its way unrivalled at the present day, a combination of profound thought and trained dexterity evolved by motives of intense belief and religious enthusiasm, while at the same time everything necessary to an advanced civilisation marked the period, minute divisions of the religious systems and civil administration, a practical knowledge of all the arts and sciences, without which architectural conceptions would be failures, the conquest of the Arabian peninsula and search for mineral wealth, the subjugation of the South, and the successful extract from its primitive rocks of the granite and basalt required to case the pyramid or mould into sarcophagi, and these blocks transported in vessels of

great size down the river at its highest flood or annual increase, to their destination. Civil and military requirements were met with careful organisation, and the sable races of Egypt's southern border drilled to expel the hostile tribes that infested its adjoining deserts. Since Ebers wrote three more pyramids of the Sakkarah group have been opened, and have revealed, by the details of their long inscriptions, that at the remote period of the VIth Dynasty the religious thought or belief in the circle of gods was as complete as at the close of its faith, of its polytheism. Pepi or Phiops, Merenra or Haremsaf, and Neferkara or Nephercheres had their costly sepulchres adorned with prayers and formulæ from the myth of Osiris, and direct declaration of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

The age of pyramids once past, and Egypt assumes another feature: the arts still improve, architecture rises to a higher conception. The temple surpasses the tomb at the time of the XIIth Dynasty, and the Doric column springs into life. The South is conquered for its gold and slaves; the North is advanced on for its mineral wealth; the Libyan or African wanders, as an itinerant juggler or a mercenary soldier, to Egypt. The Semitic families render obeisance to their Hamitic superiors, and enter Egypt as friends or vassals. The grasp which held the valleys of the Sinaitic peninsula retains it still more tightly, and Egyptian adventurers receive a lordly welcome at the court of Edom. The hereditary nobility are fostered by the Pharaohs of this and the subsequent line. Hydraulic engineering constructs vast reservoirs for irrigation, and the lake Mœris alone marks an era. The Labyrinth and the Obelisk, which attain a world renown, complete the circle of its civilisation, and are imitated by the other races of mankind. Literature still flourishes, religion retains its ancient features. From hence till the XVIIIth Dynasty there is a decline or an eclipse; but in the long interval, and towards its close, a new race of men—the so-called Shos, or Shepherds, Nomads, or Crossers — make their appearance. They seize the Delta, subdue the Egyptians, whom they drive back upon the swarthy Æthiopian. The ethnological relations of the Shepherd races are as obscure as the Egyptians. They resemble in type the Semitic; but some have endeavoured to connect them with the Hittites. Inferior in civilisation to the Egyptians, they adopted Egyptian arts, and their ascendency does not seem to have influenced in any remarkable degree Egyptian civilisation. The religion was also connected, through the god Set, with that of Egypt. At Tanis, their capital, are their remains; and the only distinctive marks of their rule is the appearance of the horse, which, brought from the plains of Asia, had probably contributed to the conquest of the valley of the Nile. Egypt expels the

Shepherds, and a new native dynasty—the XVIIIth—surpasses the glories of those which preceded it. Thothmes III. defeats at Megiddo the combined hosts of Eastern Asia, and marches to the Euphrates. Nineveh and Babylon become his tributaries; and the world known to the Egyptians contributes its united wealth to the treasuries of the Temple of Amen. His sisters had already sent embassies and naval expeditions to the eastern coast of Africa. It is no longer an age of gigantic pyramids, but one of colossal temples. Thebes inflates to overwhelming proportions; stones and temples are piled on one another, and the statue of Amenophis III., lisping to the rising sun, adds another wonder to the list of Egyptian marvels. Subject to vicissitudes, religious animosities impair the extent of empire, the Delta falls into anarchy or foreign hands; but a new dynasty, itself of Semitic origin, wrests back the country, re-conquers Palestine, and breaks the strength of its great rival, the Khita, or supposed Hittites. One heroic figure—Rameses II., the Sesostris of Greek legends—stands out in the fierce glare of historic light. Poems and official inscriptions record his unwonted prowess, and his great battle of Kadesh, on the banks of the Orontes, restores the independence, if not the supremacy, of Egypt. The canal to join the two seas is commenced by his father, a long wall is built to resist the return of Asiatic hordes to Egypt. The Exodus takes place under his successor; and Egypt, now attacked by Libyans and other Mediterranean nations, victorious at the brunt, again relapses to another decadence, to be again restored to its pristine condition. After an intestine struggle, another Rameses III.—equally devoted to the life of the camp and the palace—drives off the invaders. From north and south, east and west, Libyans, Asiatics, Europeans, and negroes are all repelled. Thebes especially, the quarter of Medinat Habu, is embellished and increased. But here end the glories of the line; a long and inglorious suite of feeble successors led to sacerdotal usurpation. Assyria, emerging from its Western struggles, directs its attentions to the East, and in Egypt a dynasty with ambitious views and powerful armies marches its hosts into Palestine, under Shishakh, and pillaged Jerusalem. Henceforth possession of Egypt was alternately disputed. Assyria and Æthiopia, Sabaco and Tirhakah (B.C. 727) appear on the scene, to retreat before the victorious hosts of Nineveh; and when Assyria succumbs to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar defeats Necho at Carchemish—Necho, who renews the attempt of the canal of Seti, and first endeavours to circumnavigate the continent of Africa. But Babylon has fallen to the Persian Cyrus, and Cambyses conquers Egypt (B.C. 527); the supremacy of Persia, shaken and contested for almost two centuries, is riveted, in B.C. 340, on the country, and the fall of Persia to the Greeks (B.C. 330) ends by the establishment of

the Greek rule of the Ptolemies: the whole civilisation changes—arts, language, and organisations, are Hellenised. It is no longer Memphis or Thebes, but Alexandria, that is the capital; wealth accumulates, but men decay; the religion is not altogether effete, for splendid temples of inferior art are still erected, as evidences of a failing faith. Pedantic disputes and philosophic sophisms replace the mysterious dogmas of the old religion at the Court of the Ptolemies, and one monument alone—the Pharos or Light Tower—marks an addition to the progress of civilisation. The dramatic incidents of the ultimate fall of the Ptolemies, and the final conquest of Egypt by the Romans after the battle of Actium, are the story of a foreign race, and no magnificent ruins attest the Greek rule in Egypt. The Roman sway was a mere continuation of the Greek in its development. A superstitious veneration of Egyptian polytheism repaired or added to some of the older monuments, and built some newer temples, or continued those of the Ptolemies, but arts and sciences declined, and the rise of Christianity was the signal for the neglect or abolition of the devices of Paganism, without adorning the country with monuments of architecture or art, and subtle disputations on points of faith replaced Egyptian culture and Greek philosophy, while monks and hermits meditated in deserts political revolution, or the destruction of ancient edifices, and the Patriarchs of Alexandria consented to the pillage of its temples and its libraries.

But the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs in B.C. 630, although at first attended by destruction and disaster—owing to the religious fanaticism of the Mohammedan victors—gave an entirely new phase to the arts and sciences; and if sculpture disappeared, architecture took a new development. Manners, customs, and civil organisation, were all remodelled or absolutely changed. Under the Abbaside khalifs in the eighth century A.D. it had attained the highest grandeur during the reign of Haroun-er-Rashid, and continued still to develop under the rule of the Touloonide and Fatimite khalifs. The present work illustrates all this in the most striking manner, and exhibits all the peculiarities of Arab life and art—the marked influence in architecture which the pointed arch, in metallic products the damascened or inlaid work, in pottery the brilliant glazes, in the woof the embroidered garments, and in design the fantastic and interlaced patterns—exercised on the material civilisation of the West. The age of the khalifs was an age alike of poetry and romance, of enormous wealth and capricious prodigality to favourites, poets, and musicians, intermingled with vain ostentation, love of learning, and public oppression, which preceded the arrival of the Crusaders in the East, and their entrance into Egypt

in A.D. 1217. These warriors, however, left no memorial more important of their advent than a rare and insignificant coinage struck at Damietta. This was, however, the age of Saladin, Richard Cœur de Lion, and Louis the Saint of France, and the termination of a vain enterprise of a rival fanaticism. The Sultans of the different dynasties have left, however, behind them magnificent mosques and splendid sepulchres, fallen into neglect and destined to ruin unless the interposition of public sentiment in Europe demands that they shall be preserved. The Turkish rule in Egypt, which began in the sixteenth century, had no great influence on the country, and collapsed under the rival intrigues of the Mamelukes and the Porte, but the French Expedition in 1798 renewed the old acquaintance with Egypt, which had been much impaired and almost lost since the first Crusade. For the conquest of Egypt by the French under Napoleon, the enlightened administration and scientific inquiry which accompanied the arms of France opened the eyes of Europe to the vast interest revealed by the oldest centre of human civilisation. All the ancient remains of Egypt were studied; those apparently most important were correctly engraved, and, for the first time, accompanied by scientific descriptions.

The French Expedition discovered the trilingual inscription known as the Rosetta Stone—the key to the interpretation of the hieroglyphs — and this monument enabled Young and Champollion to decipher and interpret the lost language of ancient Egypt, which, up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, had been laid aside as a problem apparently hopeless to solve, or taken up as a toy for the amusement of pedantry. The solution of the question in its fullest details by Champollion is one of the great literary discoveries of the century, and, when accomplished, astonishment and delight possessed all inquirers not inveterate in error or malignant by design, and a new charm pervaded every inscription, for the meaning, the age, and the object of which had been previously obscure, was rendered intelligible and plain. Religious history, manners, and customs, all were illustrated in a novel and surprising manner; the very walls, hitherto inarticulate, appeared to be endowed with speech. Stores of information contained in the various texts on the monuments, —mythological, historical, or explanatory—the speech of the noble and the exclamations and replies of slaves and peasants, were revealed. The papyri relating to the mythology, or the ritual to the funeral ceremonies, hymns to the gods, historical documents of all kinds, lists of monarchs, the epic poems of Pentaur in honour of Rameses II., the record of the donations of Rameses III. to the principal shrines of Egypt, an extensive literature and correspondence of scribes during the XIXth

Dynasty, and earlier treatises on ethics, even works of fiction, sales, marriage contracts, and accounts, have, in consequence of the discovery, stood exposed to the eye, and form a new and extensive literature.* How much the charm of Ebers' work is enhanced by his deep acquaintance, not only with the monuments and works of art, but with their interpretation of them, and with all that has been said or written on the subject!

The modern period, from the ascension of Mohammed Ali in 1811, after the destruction of the Mamelukes, is distinguished by the plans of that ruler for the civilisation of the country on the European model, and the efforts of his successors to improve its prospects and attractions by excavations of the principal ruins, and the preservation of its antiquities by Saïd Pasha; the completion of the Suez Canal by Ismail Pasha, in 1869; the grand scheme of M. Ferdinand de Lesseps; and the extension of the limits of the country on its southern confines. The administration of its finances, and the consequent improvement of the country by the joint action of France and England, close the history of a period of nearly seven thousand years.

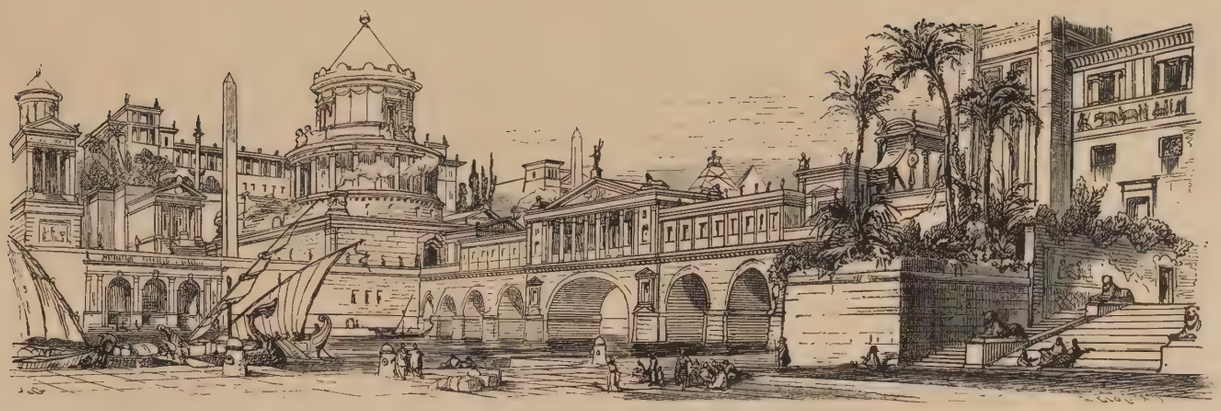
The modern Egyptians, the manners and customs of the different races, have been already described by Lane, Poole, Whately, Audouard, Goltz, Klunzinger, Zincke, and innumerable authors and travellers; and the personal experiences of Professor Ebers, besides his extensive knowledge of the principal authors in Arabic literature, have been added to the labours and remarks of his predecessors. His discovery of the ancient medical treatise of the old Pharaonic period, written in Hieratic, known as the Papyrus Ebers, and his scientific and philological works on Egypt and the books of Moses, hieroglyphical system of writing, in the "Zeitschrift fur Ægyptische Sprache" of Berlin, attest his researches into old Egypt; and his successful novels, "An Egyptian Princess," besides "Homo Sum," "Uarda," and "The Sisters," published in 1870, prove the power he possessed of popularising a subject hitherto deemed recondite. In the present work is the latest account of the Egyptians, for whom there will probably be a more brilliant future as civilisation advances, and more correct principles of political economy, and the importance of European civilisation as a means of political

* The archæological discoveries of Egypt are by no means exhausted, for quite lately the tombs of the monarchs of the XXIst dynasty accidentally revealed at Thebes, with thirty-nine mummies and their coffins, comprising kings of the XVIIth and XVIIIth and XIXth dynasties, and the remains of the great Thothmes III., and the heroic Ramesses II., or Sesostris, and the sacerdotal monarchs of the XXIst line, with their papyri and other objects, receive illustration from the labours of Champollion.

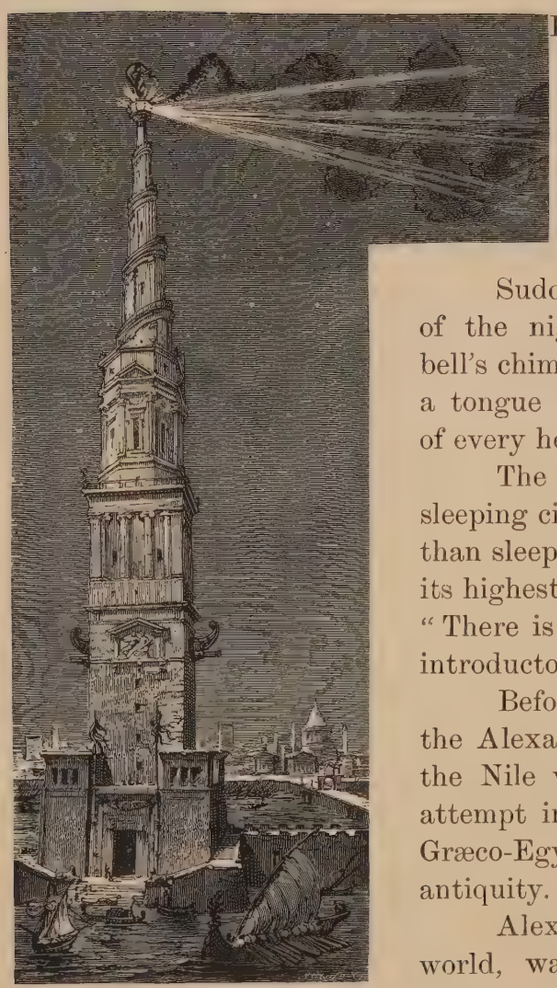
regeneration, become diffused in the far East. The interest offered by modern Egypt from all points of view, the comparison of its past and present condition, the striking difference between them and European costume and custom, receive a striking illustration from the aid afforded by photography and engraving, which give precision to descriptions however brilliantly animated or severely exact; and although Egypt, like the rest of the East, is intensely conservative, gradual change still insinuates itself, though rapid improvement lingers on its path.

It has been necessary in the English edition to add occasional notes to guide the reader as to the dates and other facts mentioned in the German text, which will thus receive illustration of points which might otherwise appear obscure; for although Egyptian chronology has been long debatable ground, and opinions on the remotest period vary to the extent of at least one-third of the whole chronology, history without some chronological indications presents only a hazy succession of events to the mind. In all cases, however, a probable date has been given, and even at the remotest period of the vast antiquity of the age of Pyramids the most recent discoveries tend to show the hoar antiquity and great age of these monuments, already preceded by a long duration of civilised human life and knowledge of arts and sciences. The importance of Egypt, both past and present, increases daily in the minds of Europe, as well as the conviction that it rivals with Greece and Rome, and shares with Assyria and Babylonia, the claims of attention to the past and future of the present day.

S. BIRCH.



Ancient Alexandria.



PHAROS IN ANCIENT ALEXANDRIA.

WHOEVER arrives in Egypt, be he a native of the North or of the West, must first set foot on the soil of Alexandria. Weary of the long sea-voyage and of all the novel pictures that meet his eye in this strange quarter of the world, he retires to his night's rest, and closes his eyes to think of home.

Suddenly, a clear resounding song breaks the silence of the night; it is the Muezzin's call to prayer—the bell's chime of the East—nature having bestowed on man a tongue and tone fitted to rouse a response in the heart of every hearer.

The Muezzin sings out his benediction over the sleeping city in deep long-drawn tones. "Prayer is better than sleep," he cries to the sleepless; and his voice rises to its highest pitch when he shouts with three-fold iteration: "There is no God but God!" or "Allah, Allah, Allah!" as introductory to a beautiful prayer.

Before rising from bed to make acquaintance with the Alexandria of to-day—the half-European threshold of the Nile valley—let us turn our minds to the past, and attempt in some degree to depict to ourselves the great Græco-Egyptian city, the most celebrated spot of later antiquity.

Alexandria, one of the youngest cities of the ancient world, was at the same time the largest and the most brilliant. The rate of its increase in extent, population, and commerce was in no way behind that of the greatest cities of the New World; and as regards the rapid development of the higher gifts of humanity—

the arts and sciences—no American city even can offer anything approaching a parallel example.

Was it to its happily chosen situation that this great centre of learning and commerce owed its marvellously rapid growth? This is hardly evident at a first glance.

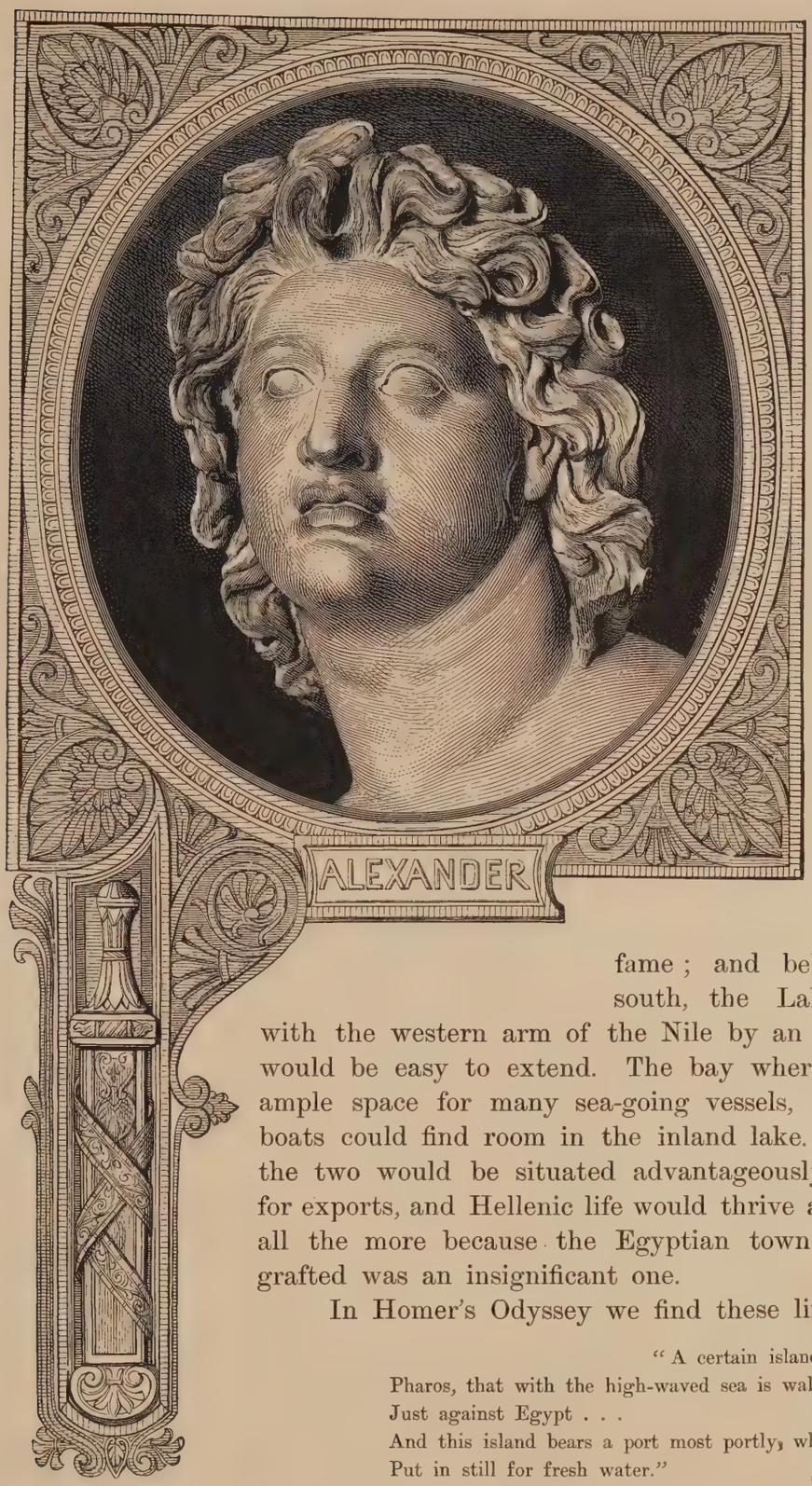
The northern coast of Egypt is flat, uniform, and unlovely, and though the waves of the Mediterranean sparkle in the sunshine in the harbour of Alexandria no less blue than on the orange-scented shores of Sorrento, or in the sunny bay of Malaga, they here break on many and dangerous rocks. In spite of the far-gleaming beacon of the Pharos of Ras-et-Teen, no vessel at the present day can enter the harbour of Alexandria by night.

An artificial canal begun by Mohammed Ali, the founder of the Vice-regal house, and named after the then reigning sultan the Mahmoudeeyeh Canal, washes the city precincts—but it is no branch of the Nile—and yields drinking water which could not be otherwise procured by digging wells, for from the soil of Egypt only salt springs rise. The coast in the vicinity of Alexandria, during the winter months, is beaten by storms of wind and rain; and the sky, whose pure azure is, at Cairo, rarely veiled, and then only by clouds that are dispersed in passing showers, is not less often obscured at Alexandria than in the peninsulas of southern Europe. Besides these drawbacks, the spot chosen by Alexander to be the site of a mart where the riches of Egypt might be exchanged for the treasures and marvels of the Indies, was at the extreme north-west of the Delta, equally remote from the Red Sea and from the high-road of the caravans by which Egypt and Syria held communication.

Nevertheless, the site selected by the genius and penetration of Alexander was the only one in Egypt which combined all the conditions indispensable to such a metropolis as he dreamed of, and such as, in fact, arose in fulfilment of his purpose.

A great Græco-Egyptian city, according to his idea, was to fill a double function; first, its harbour was to be a central mart both for the produce of the Nile valley and for goods imported from the south by way of the Red Sea, and these wares were to be dispersed throughout the world by the Greek merchants; while, in the second place, all the beauty of Hellenic life and culture in the new emporium was to be brought to bear upon Egypt. He had found the ancient realm of the Pharaohs still and stark as its mummied dead; in Alexandria the genius of the Greek was to find a new home, to release Egypt from the bonds of centuries, and to transform the barbarian nations of the Nile country, making them a controllable member of that mighty body of universal Greek dominion, which was the end he had proposed to himself as the goal of his heroic course.

On the eastern Egyptian coast lay the ancient harbours of Pelusium and Tanis on arms of the mouths of the Nile. He selected neither of these for the site of the new Greek city; for it did not escape his observant eye, or that of the scientific men who accompanied his armies, that the current of the Mediterranean bathing the Egyptian coast sets from west to east; and that, by carrying the alluvial earth annually brought down by the inundations of the Nile constantly eastward, it was destroying the harbours to the east of the delta.



How just was his foresight has since been proved; for at the present day, while thousands of ships crowd the quays of Alexandria, the ports of older fame—Pelusium and Ascalon, Tyre and Sidon—are choked by alluvial deposits, barred and useless.

In the year 332 B.C., Alexander laid the foundation of the new city, encouraged to the great work by dreams and omens which promised it a glorious future.

Directly opposite to the Egyptian port of Rhacotis to the north, close to the coast, lay the island of Pharos, of ancient fame; and behind the town, to the south, the Lake Mareotis, connected with the western arm of the Nile by an artificial canal which it would be easy to extend. The bay where the island lay offered ample space for many sea-going vessels, and thousands of Nile-boats could find room in the inland lake. A city rising between the two would be situated advantageously alike for imports and for exports, and Hellenic life would thrive and flourish unhindered; all the more because the Egyptian town on which it would be grafted was an insignificant one.

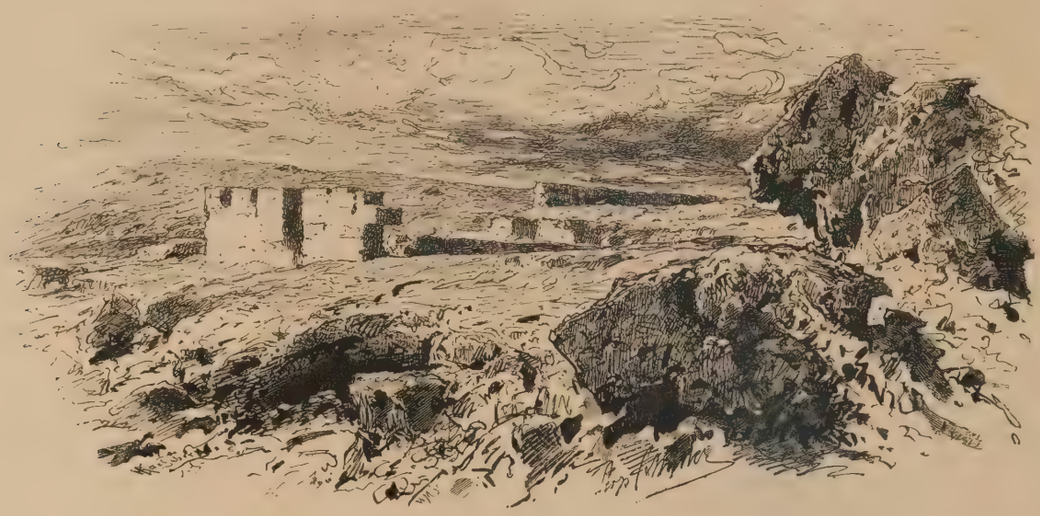
In Homer's Odyssey we find these lines:—

> "A certain island call'd
> Pharos, that with the high-waved sea is wall'd,
> Just against Egypt . . .
> And this island bears a port most portly, where sea-passengers
> Put in still for fresh water."
>
> CHAPMAN.

These lines, it is said, were heard by the sleeping Alexander at Rhacotis, uttered by a venerable old man who appeared to him in a dream.

Orders were given for the measurement of the ground and foundations, and the architect Dinocrates was commissioned to prepare a plan. This took the form of a Greek *peplum*, or of a fan, and the work of indicating the direction to be followed by the roads, and the extent of the market-places, was begun by strewing white earth on the level ground. The supply of this material falling short, it was supplemented by the assistants of the architect taking the meal which had been provided in abundance for the labourers. The legend goes on to say that hardly had this been sprinkled on the soil when numbers of birds came flying down to feed on the welcome supply of food. Alexander hailed the appearance of these feathered guests as a favourable omen, signifying the rapid prosperity and future wealth of the city.

And in truth, as birds fly to corn, so, from all Hellas, enterprising immigrants soon



RUINS OF THE CITY WALL OF ALEXANDRIA.

came streaming in; merchants and fugitives from Syria and Judæa, labourers and dealers from Egypt crowded to the new mart; and Alexander's distinguished general Ptolemy, the son of Lagus—who received the surname of Soter, or the preserver—fixed his magnificent residence there, first as governor[1] and then as king.[2] His talented successors, Philadelphus[3] and Euergetes,[4] not only did their utmost to promote the external power of Egypt, as well as its wealth and commerce, but strove eagerly to concentrate in Alexandria the culture and genius of their time; so that the learned men of the East and West crowded to the city, and learning and commerce vied with each other in the splendour of their bloom.

There is no city of antiquity of which we have such abundant records, and yet of which so few recognisable remains are left as of Alexandria. In vain we seek for an island opposite the city, although the little islet of Pharos does in fact still exist. The Ptolemies connected it with the mainland by a mole of quarried stone; and this huge mass of masonry was called the *Hepta-stadion*, from measuring seven *stadia*[5] in length. It contained the aqueduct by which the island was supplied with water,

[1] B.C. 324. [2] B.C. 305. [3] B.C. 284. [4] B.C. 247. [5] About 1,410 yards, or $\frac{7}{8}$ of a mile.

THE MUEZZIN'S CALL TO PRAYER.

and divided the harbour into two basins, which still exist. The Eastern, or New Harbour, which is no longer used, was in ancient times called the Great Harbour; the Western basin, in which the traveller from Europe disembarks, and which is being greatly extended by the Viceroy of Egypt, is now known as the Old Harbour, and in the time of the Greeks was called the Harbour of Eunostus, as it would seem after the son-in-law of Ptolemy Soter and Thais; this name, meaning "good return," survived for a long period. The two communicated by channels that were bridged over; they have long since been closed up by mud and detritus, and a broad tongue of land has been formed by the falling in of the piers of the bridges erected by the hand of man, and by the pebbles and ruins flung upon them by the waves, supplemented by artificial

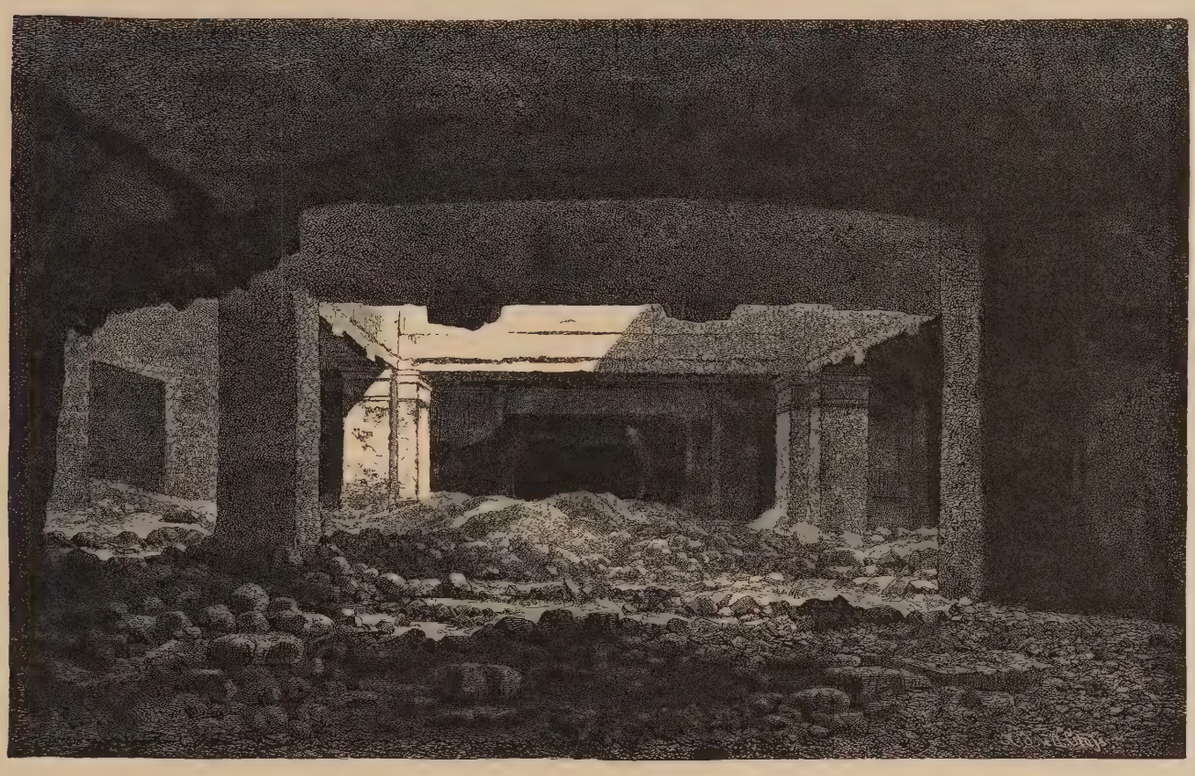
MODERN LIGHTHOUSE AT ALEXANDRIA.

additions. Many houses of the modern Alexandrians stand on the ancient Heptastadion, and its soil is the first to be trodden by the newly-arrived stranger; for the largest of the western steamships cast anchor by its eastern quay.

The Pharos island now forms its northern point; it still bears a lighthouse, but this stands at the western angle, while the old renowned structure of Sostratus—which from its site was named "*the* Pharos," and from which we to this day call a lighthouse a Pharos—stood at the opposite end of the island. It served to show the way into the rocky harbour, and was reckoned one of the most remarkable wonders of Alexandria and of the ancient world. It surpassed even the Pyramid of Cheops in height; but, thanks to the advanced state of science in our day, the light of the present lower tower shines out farther into the night than the beacon-fire which flared from the summit of its predecessor. Ptolemy Philadelphus caused it to be constructed of white marble by Sostratus of Cnidus, and he dedicated it to his deified parents. The famous architect carved his name, with an inscription, in the stone at the top of the tower. Over this, it is said, he spread plaster, and wrote on that the name of the royal builder or architect, so that when the more fragile material should have perished his own name might be read by future generations.

Let us now return to the mainland and seek the traces of the principal quarters, streets, and public buildings of the city.

By far the most magnificent portion was the *Bruchium*,[1] bathed by the waters of the Great Harbour, and adjoining the oldest part of the city, namely, the original fishing port of Rhacotis. This old quarter was always the residence chiefly of Egyptians ; and, as in all Egyptian cities, on its western side lay its "City of the Dead." For, as the sun after its day's course sinks in the west, so the soul, after its life's course, found its rest there where spread the desert inimical to all life, and where the realm of death was supposed to lie. The colonists, following the example of the



CATACOMBS IN ALEXANDRIA.

Egyptians, interred their dead there too, until late Christian times ; and the traveller who at this day visits the neighbourhood of Pompey's Pillar, and wanders westward along the sea-shore, will come upon tombs hewn in the rock, and farther inland will find catacombs of considerable extent. Even in Alexandria the native Egyptian citizens had their dead embalmed, while the Greeks adhered to their national custom of cremation.

In the eastern part of the Bruchium dwelt the Jews ; they had their own quarter, kept up but a slight connection with their brethren in Palestine, and at some periods exceeded in wealth and influence all the rest of the population, though at other times they suffered severely, and not altogether without fault on their part.

[1] The name of this quarter has been given by different classical authorities as Bruchion, Bruchium, Proucheium, and Puroucheion. Its name is supposed to mean the granary or height.

These quarters were connected by a maze of streets, in which riders and vehicles could move with comfort; they debouched on two main thoroughfares that crossed each other. The longer of these, running south-west and north-east, went from the City of the Dead to the Jews' quarter, and ended, eastwards, at the Canopic Gate—the Rosetta Gate of the present day; the other, cutting it at a right angle, led to the two gates of the Sun and Moon, and a layer of mould which has lately been discovered mingled with the pavement seems to indicate that both roads were ornamented with plantations. They must have been unusually broad and handsome. The vehicles of the rich, the loaded waggons, and the lordly processions on horseback which entered the city from the Hippodrome by the Canopic Gate, found ample room on the paved way of square granite, forty mètres[1] broad; and when the sun was blazing hot, or when violent storms of rain fell, the pedestrian found shelter, for the wide side-paths were overarched by colonnades.

GROUP AMONG THE RUINS OF ANCIENT ALEXANDRIA.

The gates of the Sun and Moon have vanished, the colonnades are overthrown, and recent layers of soil overlie the ancient pavement; however, the aqueducts under that pavement were, a few years ago, restored to their original purpose. Little remains of the houses of the inhabitants; yet the inquirer, if he quits the quarter occupied by the well-to-do Europeans, and betakes himself to the more modest Egyptian quarter on the western side of the city, and follows the line of the coast, or, passing through the Canopic Gate (the Rosetta Gate), walks across the open country, may come across many traces of ancient houses and public buildings. He has only to look round him. It is certainly vain to expect to discover monuments of any particular artistic merit; but he will find tanks of very early structure, traces of the foundation-walls of temples and palaces, thresholds, door-posts, and architraves in marble; in the mosques beautifully carved pillars from the Greek sanctuaries; a stone sarcophagus serving as a trough from which an ass quenches his thirst; the shaft of a pillar on which some Arab mother sits nursing her child, or which lies before a doorway, half covered with sand and overgrown with the herbs of the desert. The daily traffic of the Alexandrians was from the inner harbour by the Lake Mareotis to the sea and back again; on high festival days they betook themselves principally by the larger streets to the Bruchium. Here stood the Palaces of the kings with the Museum

[1] About 136 feet.

and its library, the noblest temples of the Greek gods, the Mausoleum called the *Soma*, containing the body of Alexander the Great, the circus and the theatre, the gymnasium, the Hippodrome with its winding course, and many other public buildings to which the principal officials, the learned and the artists, the freeborn youth, and the pleasure-seeking crowd constantly flocked.

Theocritus[1] has given us a picture of the crowd on the day of the festival of Adonis, which two women—intimate acquaintance, and wives of citizens of Syracuse settled in Alexandria—have gone to assist at together. Gorgo and Praxinoa[2] behave under the circumstances exactly as if they had been born in the nineteenth century after Christ instead of in the third century before.

Gorgo appears and Praxinoa orders her maid-servant:—

"Quick, Eunoa, find a chair,
And fling a cushion on it."

When Gorgo has taken her place and recovered her breath, she sighs out—

"Oh what a thing is spirit! Here I am,
Praxinoa, safe at last from all that crowd
And all those chariots——every street a mass
Of boots and soldiers' jackets. Oh! the road
Seemed endless, and you live so far away."

Praxinoa laments over her "odious pest of a husband" who has taken this dwelling at the end of the world (probably near the Gate of the Sun). Gorgo warns her not, in her child's presence, to speak thus of its father, and Praxinoa calls out to the boy:—

"There, baby sweet, I never meant papa."

But the small citizen is too sharp, and his "aunt" Gorgo says:—

"It understands, by 'r lady![3] dear papa!"

At last Praxinoa has completed her toilet with the help of the maid, who does not get through the business without a scolding, and Gorgo exclaims:—

"My dear, that full pelisse becomes you well.
What did it stand you in, straight off the loom?"

[1] Idyll 15. [2] As they speak in Doric their names are spelled so, instead of Praxinoe, Eunoe. [3] Proserpine.

EGYPTIAN WOMEN DRAWING WATER.

To which her friend replies :—

"Don't ask me, Gorgo; two good pounds[1] and more;
Then I gave all my mind to trimming it."

The smart lady then has her mantle thrown round her, her sun-shade elegantly put up, and when all is done she gives the child in charge of the nurse, desires her to call in the dog and to lock the door, and then hurries off with her friend, down the road towards the royal palace on the Bruchium. They get through the crowd unharmed as far as the palace gate, but there the mob and confusion are much greater, and Praxinoa cries out :—

"Your hand please, Gorgo. Eunoa, you
Hold Eutychis—hold tight or you'll be lost.
We'll enter in a body—hold us fast!
Oh! dear, my muslin[2] gown is torn in two,
Gorgo, already! Pray, good gentleman,
(And happiness be yours) respect my robe."

The gentleman appealed to is gallant, and when they have reached their destination Eunoa says, laughing :—

"We're all in now,
As quoth the goodman, and shut out his wife."

We will follow the Syracusan ladies to the Bruchium and the king's palaces, which stood on the eastern side of the harbour, and eastward of the spot where Cleopatra's Needle lately stood, southwards from the peninsula of Lochias, which, however, can now hardly be recognised. Magnificent gardens surrounded the palaces of the Ptolemies, and adjoining them stood the most celebrated of all the institutions founded by the dynasty of the Lagidæ, the Museum with its library. If the Syracusan ladies had in fact come from the neighbourhood of the Gate of the Sun, they must have crossed the market-place, and thence have followed the Canopic way a little to the east ; then they would have turned to the left by a side street, have passed the huge Circus of the amphitheatre—where tickets and programmes of the games to be performed would be offered them for sale, and horn or ivory passes for the performances at the festival. But Gorgo and Praxinoa resisted the temptation, and did not rest till they reached the grove of trees which was planted on the top of the artificial mound of Soma, the Mausoleum of Alexander.

The body of the great founder of the city had been already brought from Babylon[3] by the first Ptolemy,[4] and it remained in its golden sarcophagus till a degenerate son of the Lagidæ sacrilegiously melted down the metal and substituted a glass sarcophagus for the golden one.

The ladies went up by the citizens' steps, for the levelled way which led out from the palace through the Bruchium to the high streets might be used only by members of the court. It was called the "Royal Road," and it was in reference to

[1] Minæ, or 200 drachmæ, about £7 10s.

[2] The *Theristrion*, or thin summer garment, covering the head and face.

[3] It was visited by Augustus, who touched, and so injured the nose of the corpse.

[4] Supposed to be represented on the gold staters or didrachms of this monarch.

this that Euclid made the famous reply to Ptolemy Soter, who asked him for some easy method of attaining to a knowledge of his propositions—"There is no Royal Road to mathematics."

The gymnasium to the right as they go on, is empty to-day, for all the youth of Alexandria are taking part in the festival; even in the courts and halls of the Museum, which for the present we will pass by, all is still; for the king has invited the most illustrious of those who dwell there to be his guests. Our Syracusan ladies are allowed to enter the vestibule of the palace, where the statue of Adonis lies on costly drapery spread on a silver framework, and surrounded by beds of flowers, and where the form of the lovely Cypris[1] is to be seen on a not less magnificent couch. They are permitted to hear the festal song of the noble singer who was crowned mistress of song in the Ialemos[2] the year before; but they have to hasten home, for Gorgo's husband has not yet broken his fast, and "without his supper," says she, "Diocleides is simply vinegar."[3]

Just as the feast of Adonis tempted the two ladies to the Bruchium, so the greatest festival of the Alexandrians, the Feast of Dionysus, brought all the men to the palaces and their vicinity. This Feast of Dionysus was celebrated with even greater delights and tenfold more splendour than at Athens itself, though, no doubt, with less of the true sentiment of beauty. The Ptolemies made it the occasion for displaying the full extent of their wealth, and all the wild enjoyments of life and sensual desires that fermented and seethed in the souls of the excitable inhabitants of the metropolis of the world, at these feasts threw off all control, and rioted and revelled without restraint. Moderation was accounted a crime, and the Bruchium was the scene of a vast orgy.

Only a privileged few could share in the magnificent banquets within the precincts of the king's palaces; but every one was free to partake of the bounty bestowed on the people at the festal procession. The account of this feast as given by Callixenus, who was an eye-witness, sounds quite fabulous; nevertheless it must

[1] Aphrodite or Venus. [2] "In singing the dirge." *Ialemos* is the dirge or threne. [3] Theocritus in English verse. C. S Calverley.

have some claim to be believed, even though it is allowable to make deductions from the numbers he gives. The representations given on this solemn occasion were connected with the myth of Dionysus, not however kept free from all admixture with Egyptian traditions and customs.

The procession with the mythological impersonations must have been interminably long. In the time of the native kings the ancestral images of the Egyptian gods and Pharaohs had been introduced;[1] and in the same way the gods of Olympus with the Macedonian princes, Alexander the Great, Ptolemy Soter, and his son Philadelphus, were now represented. To add to the delights of the feast splendid sham fights were held, where the victors, and among them the king, received golden crowns as prizes. One such feast-day under the Ptolemies cost between £300,000 and £400,000; and how enormous must the sums have been which they expended on their fleet—eight hundred splendid Nile-boats lay in the inner harbour of the Lake Mareotis alone—on the army, on the court, on the Museum and the Library!

COIN OF PTOLEMY SOTER.

No sovereign house of that period could compare with the Lagidæ in wealth, nor have any kings ever applied their treasure to more profitable purposes than the first Ptolemies.

COIN OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

Ptolemy Soter, first as governor under Alexander[2] and subsequently as king, was the founder of the splendid edifices on the Bruchium, many of which were only finished by his son Philadelphus. He expended but little on his own palace, for he was wont to say that a king should be lavish to others and not to himself. He was a frugal and at the same time a wise and powerful sovereign, who sowed the seeds of most of the learning, and laid the foundations of most of the institutions that afterwards made Alexandria great and famous; and his disposition to promote science and art was inherited even by the most worthless of his descendants. He followed Alexander's example in leaving to the Egyptians their old laws and

[1] A series of statues of deceased kings carried in the procession of the festival of the god Amsi or Khem, in the reign of Rameses III., of the XXth dynasty, is given by Wilkinson, "Manners and Customs," Vol. III. pl. lx. (New Edition.)

[2] B.C. 331.

gods; but he held them in subjection by establishing military colonies. He might even have succeeded in engrafting Hellenic life and the Greek spirit throughout the Nile valley if he had not denied all municipal rights to the children of mixed marriages, with a view of keeping the blood of the Greek colonists pure. Many as there were among the inhabitants of Alexandria who were not Greeks, the council was always addressed as "Men of Macedonia."

LADY OF ALEXANDRIA IN A ROBE OF TRANSPARENT BOMBYX SILK.

Soter was equally zealous in the cause of commerce; he had the harbours of the city enlarged and improved; he brought eight thousand ship-builders from Phœnicia, and a great number of cedar trunks from Lebanon to use in increasing his fleet. The old Egyptian merchants had not known the use of a coinage, but had carried on their dealings by weighing out metal, which was commonly wrought into the form of rings. Ptolemy Soter[1] followed the example set by the states of the Greek metropolis, and caused coins of gold, silver, and copper to be struck in Alexandria. Many of the Ptolemaic heads, particularly those on the more precious metals, are hardly surpassed in beauty of workmanship, and enable us to form a personal acquaintance, so to speak, with the different individuals of the family of the Lagidæ. The mathematician Euclid, the physicians Erasistratus and Herophilus, the Athenian Demetrius Phalereus, were among the circle of learned men which Soter gathered round him; Demetrius Phalereus he first took into his council as learned in law, and it was from him that the suggestion to collect a library afterwards emanated. He wrote a history of the wars of Alexander the Great, which is unfortunately lost to us. Among the artists who flourished under him in Alexandria, we need only name the painter Apelles and his rivals, and the sculptor Antiphilus. Buildings were needed in the new metropolis, pleasure and splendour were in great request in the great emporium of the products of three continents; what wonder then that Alexandria attracted artists of every description, that architects and pleasure-loving Greeks congregated there, that the East and West clasped hands there, the sovereign house setting the example of adorning life with all that was most lovely and delightful?

The *hetaira* Thais was Soter's first wife; his second was the Macedonian Berenice.[2] Both these queens taught the Alexandrian ladies how the Greek feeling for beauty could be combined with the oriental love of splendour. The most exquisite of all the gems that have been handed down to us were engraved for the Ptolemies, and it was especially for the ladies of Alexandria that the weavers of Cos

[1] Ptolemy Soter coined gold staters, or didrachms, 55 grains in weight, equal to 25 silver drachms; and pentadrachms, of 275 grains, in the same metal, equal to 125 silver drachms; and silver tetradrachms, of 220 grains. It is uncertain if he coined large copper, which was issued on the old Egyptian standard, but must have been employed for small change.

[2] From this name a whole set of words is derived, including *Bernstein*, the German for amber, and through a series (vernice, vernix, vernis) the modern forms—varnish, Eng.; vernis, Fr.

manufactured a delicate fabric of bombyx or silk,[1] a kind of firm but transparent gauze, which covered without concealing the fair form of the wearer.

This is not the place to enlarge on the wars conducted by Ptolemy Soter. Towards the end of his reign, B.C. 284, he associated Philadelphus, his son by Berenice, in the government. This prince found Alexandria in an advanced state as to its structures, to which only the ornamentation was lacking—and nothing could more perfectly accord with his talents and tastes than the fulfilment of this task. A man of much smaller powers than his father, he would never have been equal to the effort of creating a great city out of nothingness; but the disciple of Straton[2] and Philetas,[3] the wealthy and tasteful patron of science, was eminently fitted to finish and elaborate that which lay under his hand. He and his father have been happily compared to Solomon and his father David.

Under him Alexandria reached the summit of its glory. No member of his family, with the exception of the last Cleopatra, earned a greater celebrity than he; and that not by the splendour of warlike deeds, but by the quiet arts of peace for which his reign of three-and-thirty years and an unheard-of influx of wealth gave him ample time and means. Under him was made that translation of the Bible into Greek which is known by the name of the Septuagint; but the story which tells of Seventy translators who, although they worked apart in different rooms, produced renderings which perfectly agreed, must be consigned to the class of legends.

The greatest and most valuable work of Ptolemy Philadelphus was his anxious care for the Museum, which under him attained its most flourishing development. In this magnificent structure the most distinguished sages of the time of the Ptolemies found a welcome, and such protection from external worries as conduced to their advantageous co-operation in study and in teaching. It was situated in the same quarter as the king's palace, and consisted of a "Grove," *i.e.*, a large court with fountains and arbours; an extensive open hall protected from the weather by a colonnade in which the learned met, disputed, and found room to gather their disciples around them; and a large building with a spacious dining-hall. Here the members of the institute reclined at their meals—for the Greeks always ate reclining—classed according to the schools to which they belonged; the Aristotelian reclining by the Aristotelian, the Platonist by Platonists. Each mess chose its principal (or president), and the body of principals constituted a senate whose sittings were presided over by a neutral High Priest chosen by the government.

The structure was spacious, the decoration of its courts and halls was splendid and artistic, and the independence of the individual sages appears to have been perfect; they were always at liberty to teach or to pursue their investigations in the quiet of seclusion.

In the time of Philadelphus the Museum was the focus which collected all the rays of the spiritual and intellectual life of the period, and the means of culture put at the disposal of its members were unequalled; for Philadelphus displayed so much

[1] A kind of silk, according to some authors (Yates, "Textrinum Antiquorum," 1843, p. 168, where all the classical authorities upon the Bombyx and the Coian garments are cited and discussed). A description of their transparent fineness is given by Seneca, "De Beneficiis," vii. c. 9. The transparent garments of Cleopatra are mentioned by Lucan, x., l. 141.

[2] A philosopher, who taught physics and material pantheism.

[3] Poet and grammarian.

judgment and liberality in extending the collection of books made by his father, and had it so admirably arranged and catalogued, that this library—which was in connection with the Museum of Alexandria, and contained four hundred thousand rolls—was justly regarded as the finest of all antiquity. By the time of Cæsar, when these treasures, which had guided the labours of many Alexandrian sages, fell a prey to fire, the collection begun by the Ptolemies seems to have increased to nine hundred thousand rolls.

COIN OF PTOLEMY V. EPIPHANES.

There is no province of science which was not cultivated in the Museum of Alexandria, no branch of learning which was not promoted there; but the most important and permanent results were produced in the departments of grammar—philology in the modern sense of the word—and in natural sciences.

It is to the critical labours of the Alexandrians that we owe the preservation of the literature of the Greeks, and the decisive influence that this has had on the culture of western Europe need hardly be pointed out. As regards natural science it is quite certain that the splendid advance it has made in our own time is indissolubly linked with the results obtained, and more particularly with the methods introduced by the Alexandrian school. The revival of science was in the first instance no more than a return to the principles of the Alexandrians.

The Ptolemies took delight in their intercourse with the sages of the Museum, and they strove to gather together within its walls all the most eminent minds of the time. Letters have been preserved from the hand of Menander, the great Athenian author of comedy, and from his lady-love Glycera. Menander writes to her:—"I have received letters from Ptolemy the King of Egypt, in which he invites me and Philemon in the most pressing manner, promising us in a princely fashion the good things, as they call them, of the earth. . . . . Let him consult for himself. I shall want no advice. Thou, my Glycera, art my Hellenistic jurisdiction; thou art to me a whole council of Areopagites, hast ever been and shalt continue to be my every thing."

Glycera answers:—"As soon as you sent me the letters of the king I read them. I call Calligenia [Ceres] to witness, in whose temple I am now serving, that I rejoiced, Menander, beyond the power of containing myself, nor did my joy escape the notice of those who were present. There was my mother, with my sister Euphronion, and a female friend whom you are acquainted with. . . . . Seeing unusual joy in my countenance and eyes, they enquired of me: 'What great piece of good fortune, my dear Glycera, has befallen you, that you appear so totally changed in body and mind, while a certain gleam of joy and pleasure shines through your whole frame.' 'Oh!' said I, in a tone and voice loud enough for every one who was present to hear me, 'Ptolemy the King of Egypt has sent for my Menander, promising him in a manner half his kingdom!' and when I spoke this I held out and brandished in my hands the letter with the royal seal."[1]

[1] Alciphron's epistles, translated by Beloe, p. 121.

If these letters are not genuine, they at any rate show us with what feelings the Greeks received an invitation to Alexandria. Menander certainly could not quit Athens, but many other poets and philosophers accepted the bidding of the Ptolemies, and found in Alexandria a new and congenial home, dear to them even long after the glories of the Ptolemaic dynasty were extinct.

Soter and Philadelphus were succeeded by Euergetes I., the son of the latter king; he greatly extended the frontier of Egypt eastward, and at the same time found time, taste, and means to maintain Alexandria as the metropolis of art, learning, and commerce.

FATHER NILE. *(In the Vatican, Rome.)*

During the minority of Ptolemy V. Epiphanes, and after the defeat at Paneas,[1] the protectorship of this king was placed in the hands of the Roman Senate, and from that time Roman influence was increasingly felt in Alexandria, even under Euergetes II., surnamed Physcon, B.C. 146, whose strong, though crime-stained, hands and far-seeing ability availed to postpone for a short time the inevitable fall of his degenerate house. During the last peaceful interval of his stormy and interrupted reign, he found means greatly to develop Alexandrian trade; but his next successors lost all that they might still have preserved. The Roman general Pompey was appointed protector of the famous Cleopatra and her husband, who was also her brother;

[1] The battle of Paneas was fought between Scopas, the general of Epiphanes, and Antiochus, B.C. 198, and resulted in the defeat of the general of Epiphanes.

CLEOPATRA CARRIED INTO THE PALACE.

and after the battle of Pharsalia he was murdered off the Egyptian coast at the instigation of his ward. Cæsar himself disembarked a few days later at Alexandria, and after defending himself on the Bruchium against a superior force, he, with the aid of Mithridates, routed his Egyptian foe. Ptolemy sank with the ship in which he was, in the battle with the Romans that was fought on an arm of the Nile by the Delta, and from that time, B.C. 47, Egypt, including Alexandria, belonged to Rome; although Cleopatra and her young brother, only eleven years of age—who was at first co-regent with her, but from whom she soon freed herself—continued to wear the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt.

While Cæsar was defending himself on the Bruchium, Cleopatra, then seventeen years of age, had had herself rolled up in a carpet like a bale of goods, and smuggled into the palace on the back of a servant. Her marvellous gifts of body and mind soon achieved the conquest of the heart of the great Roman; but, unlike Antony, who not long after sacrificed his duty and his fame to the intoxicating joys of a life with this woman, Cæsar never showed himself greater as a general than at the defence of the palace of Alexandria. In those days of extreme peril the famous library of the Museum fell a prey to the flames; Cleopatra subsequently endeavoured to repair the mischief, and induced Antony to transport the two hundred thousand volumes of the library of Pergamus to Alexandria. By so doing she carried out the traditions of her house, which always supported science and those who fostered it. Under her the aged physician Dioscorides produced his works, and the Alexandrian astronomer Sosigenes, who was no stranger to the Egyptian mode of computing time, assisted Cæsar in the introduction of that new method of calculating the calendar which is now universally known as the Julian Era.

On the occasion of Cæsar's triumph at Rome, a statue of the Nile and a model of the Pharos of Alexandria in many coloured lights were exhibited to the people of the Tiber; and when, three years later, B.C. 44, the dagger of the assassin pierced the heart of the great Dictator, Cleopatra was living with her son and his, named Cæsarion, in a villa on the banks of the Tiber.

Days of the greatest splendour and most intoxicating delight were destined once more to shine on the Bruchium in Alexandria when Cleopatra, then five and twenty, induced her judge and conqueror Antony, after the battle of Philippi, to follow her to Alexandria and devote himself to her cause; attracted by a passion which she seems to have returned, and which was at any rate most romantic. The dazzling splendour of the boat in which the enchantress of the Nile went to meet the Roman conqueror, the irresistible fascination of her beauty and charm, and the

admirable talents of the woman who could talk to each officer in his native tongue, have been painted by Plutarch in such glowing colours that Shakespeare, in describing the first meeting of these famous lovers, has closely followed the historian's narrative.

"The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne
Burnt in the water: the poop was beaten gold;
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
The winds were love-sick: with them the oars were silver;
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke and made
The water, which they beat, to follow faster,
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
It beggared all description: she did lie
In her pavilion, (cloth of gold, of tissue,)
O'erpicturing that Venus where we see
The fancy out-work nature; on each side her
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool
And what they did, undid.
Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides
So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes
And made their bends adornings: at the helm
A seeming mermaid steers; the silken tackle
Swells with the touches of those flower-soft hands
That yarely frame the office. From the barge
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast
Her people out upon her; and Antony,
Enthroned in the market-place did sit alone,
Whistling to the air."

CLEOPATRA ON THE CYDNUS.

The life of debauch led by Antony and Cleopatra has become a byword, and in fact the unlimited variety of sensual delight indulged in by this pair, the new pleasures invented by them, and their immeasurable expenditure remain as unparalleled as

CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE.

their indefatigable powers of enjoyment. At their banquets the guests waded through roses, the vessels were of unheard-of value, the food of unrivalled delicacy; and not only were the revels carried on through the night in the palace, but the guests wandered in disguise through the streets of the slumbering city. Music and song resounded, and costly perfumes floated in the air, in constant accompaniment to the games, the feasts, the hunting, and the boating of this famous couple who, with appropriate reference to the gold and silver splendour of their lives, called their children Alexander Helios (the Sun) and Cleopatra Selene (the Moon). The treasures at their disposal seemed to be inexhaustible; Cleopatra was the first to dissolve a pearl in order to increase the costliness of a draught of wine, and she came to the conclusion, as a connoisseur in luxury, that nothing was so extravagant as the most expensive incense; everything else having some certain value or outcome, while the worth of four hundred denarii[1] of spices used but once to anoint the hands was wafted away on the air and lost for ever.

The days of repentance followed when Antony was defeated at the sea-fight of Actium, without attempting to avail himself of his powerful infantry, and forgetful even of his own often-proved and heroic courage. After this disgraceful defeat, he withdrew into a tower on a spit of land washed by the waters of the great harbour of Alexandria, which he called his Timoneum, after the misanthropical philosopher of Athens, concerning whom the most famous poet of the Alexandrian Academy wrote the following epigram :—

A. Timon, who Timon art no more—
Light, darkness, which is worst a bore?
B. Darkness—for in the grave I find
Worse swarms of those I'd leave behind.[2]

But once more Antony, abandoned by his followers, met his Cleopatra for a brief spell of wanton luxury. Once more, in his struggle with Octavian, he found his old manly spirit, and then the hour of doom fell upon him and his queen. Both fell into the hands of the conqueror, but only in death. Antony evaded the hopeless future by a stroke of his sword, and Cleopatra by the bite of a poisonous asp.

When Augustus mounted the throne of the Cæsars, B.C. 30, Egypt bowed unresistingly to his sceptre, and became a Roman province. All the subsequent emperors were acknowledged by the priests, even in the inmost chambers of the temples, as Autocrats[3] (or independent rulers), and enjoyed the divine honours paid to the Pharaohs, even in the sanctuaries at the Cataract and in the Oases of the desert. Augustus caused the suburb of Necropolis to be founded on the plain to the east of Alexandria, where he had defeated Antony; and later emperors still contributed to decorate the Egyptian capital with splendid buildings. The Alexandrians erected the so-called Sebasteum in honour of Tiberius on that spot, by the great harbour, where now stands an obelisk known as Cleopatra's Needle, to which the city of Trieste

[1] About £12.

[2] Callimachus, Major R. G. MacGregor's translation.

[3] The word *autocrator* is a Greek equivalent of the Roman Imperator, and appears with Augustus in Egypt, as the official language of the country was Greek, not Latin. In the hieroglyphical inscriptions of the Roman period the word *autocrator*, or its equivalent (in hieroglyphics), is used as a prenomen and inclosed by a royal oval or cartouche.

pretends to lay claim.[1] Its companion, which for a long period lay on the earth, has been erected in London. It escaped the perils of an adventurous voyage, in a singular vessel constructed for the purpose, and was landed safely near the Thames. Neither of the obelisks has anything whatever to do with Cleopatra, nor is it true that that queen built the Sebasteum in honour of Cæsar after the birth of Cæsarion. The obelisk was only named after her because her name is one of the few among those of antiquity which has remained familiar to the memory of succeeding generations, and is therefore associated with all the great works of ancient times. The celebrated obelisk that decorated the Sebasteum was brought from the old city of the Sun, Heliopolis. It is 21·6 metres high (about seventy feet), and the sister obelisk, now for ever parted from it, stands on a London quay, the Thames Embankment, as the obelisk of Luxor[2] has long stood on the Place de la Concorde in Paris. King Thothmes III. erected the obelisk known as Cleopatra's Needle at the most splendid epoch of ancient Egypt, in the sixteenth century before Christ. The hieroglyphics engraved in the granite to perpetuate the glory of his name, were inlaid with silver-gilt,[3] and its point was capped with the same metal. It was dedicated to the Sun-god Ra, and formerly the beams of the day-star were mirrored in the polished surface of the granite and gold. These obelisks stood before the door of the Sebasteum, around which lay gardens, and its colonnades were decorated with paintings and statues. This magnificent edifice was burnt down during a revolt of the heathen against the Christians, A.D. 366. How and when it was again destroyed after its restoration is uncertain. At the present day a stone-mason has established his store and yard on the site of this once splendid structure, and the whistle of the locomotive from the neighbouring station of Ramleh disturbs the contemplative visitor. The venerable monument in its sordid surroundings arouses no sentimental feelings, and it is only when it was seen from the sea that it had some picturesque charm or reminded us of the past greatness of the Greek city.

The famous "Pompey's Pillar," too, carries us back to the Alexandria of the Roman emperors. It stands south-west of the city, and marks the spot where once the Serapeum must have stood, and where the Necropolis adjoined the Egyptian quarter of Rhacotis.

The Serapeum was by no means merely a temple to the god Serapis, whose worship was introduced by the Ptolemies, in order to give to the mixed races they governed a deity which Greeks and Egyptians might worship with equal devotion. It was also a learned institution, with numerous branches annexed, and it became at a later period a centre for the spiritual and mystical requirements of all the various shades of creed and opinion that met in Alexandria. In the time of the

[1] This obelisk has been conveyed to New York.

[2] The obelisk stood on four bronze crabs, which supported it, and on one of these was found a Greek and Latin inscription, that it had been re-erected by the architect Pontius, in the 8th year of Augustus, A.D. 24. The inscriptions show it was originally erected by Thothmes III., at Heliopolis, and erected again by Rameses II. at the same place.

[3] The expression on the obelisk itself, *tasm*, or *uasm*, appears to mean gilded, for this word does not appear in any lists of metals, nor does it enter into the computations of metals, or lists recording the weight of different kinds of gold. It is, however, occasionally mentioned on obelisks that they were capped with this material; or, perhaps, merely tipped with it. One idea is that the expression meant copper; but the already-mentioned objection is equally adverse to that idea, although Abdallatif notices that in his time some obelisks remained capped with that material.

Cæsars only the Capitol of Rome excelled it in splendour. It towered far above its surroundings, carriages approached it by a well-paved way, and pedestrians went

POMPEY'S PILLAR.

up to it by a flight of a hundred steps that grew wider towards the top. The fore-court was entered by a circular domed gateway, supported on four pillars, and at last the Temple itself came into view with its obelisks, its fountains, its subterranean rooms, and cells for penitents; with its library, containing three hundred

EGYPTIAN GIRL.

thousand volumes, its halls and the gigantic pillars which could be seen from afar, even at sea. Paintings attracted the visitor, and the glitter of precious metals and stones dazzled his sight. A pious thrill filled his soul as he approached the sanctuary where the statue of the god—probably executed by Bryaxis—sat enthroned. It consisted of plates of precious metal, skilfully overlaying and concealing a nucleus of wood; it wore the Calathus on its head, and at its feet lay a Cerberus, with the heads of a lion, a wolf, and a dog, entwined by a snake. Through an opening, which was cunningly contrived in the half-dark sanctuary, rays of light fell on the lips of the god as though to kiss them. Under Marcus Aurelius fire broke out in the Serapeum, but the library and the statue of the god escaped injury. All that was destroyed was restored with new splendour, for Alexandria proudly styled herself the city of Serapis, and this god, like the Egyptian Isis, found priests and votaries throughout almost the whole Roman Empire.

When, under Aurelian, A.D. 273, the Bruchium was destroyed, and with it all the Museum buildings, the Serapeum became the meeting-place of the learned. It was not until Christianity rapidly took root in Egypt that the worship of the god was endangered; and when Theodosius promulgated his decree against the images worshipped by the heathen, and Theophilus, archbishop of Alexandria, devoted himself to carrying it out with fanatic zeal, the temple of Serapis was razed to the ground, and with it the statue of the god. The history of its destruction is full of dramatic interest. Every one believed that if any man ever dared to lift a sacrilegious hand against the sacred person of the god, heaven and earth would fall in ruins. But a soldier was found bold enough to lay a ladder against the statue, to seize a heavy axe, and to mount the steps. The blood curdled in the veins of the spectators, and even the Christians who were looking on watched the soldier's deed in trembling, and held their breath, awaiting some monstrous issue. The soldier swung his axe and hit the image on the cheek, which fell off rattling to the ground. All listened and none dared stir; but no lightning fell, no thunder roared; the sun shone brightly; no quakings shook the earth! The soldier struck another blow, a third and a fourth; the precious metal fell ringing down, and the mutilated body of the god was dragged through the streets—those probably who had trembled most with terror being those who treated it with the most impudent contempt. Finally it was burnt in the amphitheatre.

Nothing remains of the splendid edifice but a few shafts of columns lying on the ground, and Pompey's Pillar. An Arab cemetery with innumerable graves now occupies the site of its former splendour, and the mourners who come with palm-branches to the resting-place of their dead, and tell how bitter a loss has fallen on them, little guess how fitting an echo their lamentations over the transitory nature of all earthly things find on this spot. Pompey's Pillar, the last witness to the splendour of the past, still stands up against the sky, tall and stark, and little injured. It is the only work of art in the Greek style that can compare in magnitude with the work of Pharaonic times, and it is a masterpiece of elegant proportion. It is constructed of red granite from the first cataract, it stands on a quadrangular plinth, and, with this and the capital, is about 99 feet high. The capital, which is Corinthian, either is much weather-worn or was never finished; on the top a

ARAB CEMETERY.

statue formerly stood. This pillar does not in any way owe its name to the great Pompey who was murdered off the Egyptian coast by his ward Ptolemy, but to a Roman prefect of the same name who, as is proved by the inscription it bears, erected it in honour of the Emperor Diocletian, the "guardian genius of the city," in gratitude for a gift of grain he had sent to the Alexandrians.

The citizens erected another monument to the same emperor, namely, the bronze image of a certain horse, to which, indeed, they owed much gratitude. One Achilleus[1] had set himself up as emperor in opposition to Diocletian; the Alexandrians took up his cause, and Diocletian had to besiege the city for eight months before it surrendered. Achilleus was killed, and the emperor ordered that as many of the citizens should be massacred as would bring the blood up to his horse's knees. The butchery began, and he went towards the place of execution; suddenly his horse stumbled over a body and fell on his knees, that were wetted with blood. The emperor's threat was fulfilled, and the horse deserved the gratitude of the citizens, for far worse had befallen them some time previously.[2] Caracalla, roused to anger by some jests and epigrams of the satirists of the great city—which had received him joyfully and worthily—fell upon the elders at a banquet, and on the youth of the city at the gymnasium, and had them all killed. The massacre and plundering lasted for several days; the waters in the harbour gleamed red with the blood of the slaughtered citizens, and the number of the killed was so enormous that the emperor dared not render any account to the senate; in his report he boasted that he had spent these days in pious offices, and had sacrificed the men with beasts to the gods.[3] He had a strong wall, with forts at intervals, erected all across the city, to reduce the inhabitants to unresisting submission.

Happier memories were associated with the visit of another and earlier emperor, namely, with that of Hadrian, who disputed with the philosophers of the Museum, and was thanked by them with much flattery.[4] The poet Pancrates, for instance, offered him a rare red lotus-flower, and declared the blossom had grown from the blood of a lion that the emperor had slain with his own hand in the Libyan desert. At that time posts in the Museum were indeed mere sinecures, but many men of conspicuous merit were happy to fill them, besides a number of less worthy persons—curiosity-hunters and dealers in trifles; we may instance the grammarian (or, as we should say, philologist) Apollonius Dyscolus, and the astronomer Claudius Ptolemæus,[5] whose system of cosmogony was pre-eminent for more than a thousand years in the Mohammedan and Christian worlds.

Even at a later date philosophers of distinction were not lacking at Alexandria, and it was still the soil where Athenæus[6] could live and flourish—a man to whom no sage saying, no anecdote of antiquity was unknown; and where so keen a judge of mankind as Lucian[7] found food for his satirical tastes and powers.

[1] An usurper who reigned four months, A.D. 296.

[2] A.D. 284.

[3] A.D. 216. He was present during the time of the massacre at the Serapeum.

[4] A.D. 130. Coins were struck to record his visit, with figures of the Nile, Egypt, and Alexandria; the most remarkable represents Hadrian and his wife Sabina sacrificing to Serapis and Isis.

[5] Supposed to have lived about the period. His observatory was at Alexandria.

[6] Born at Naucratis, he wrote the *Deipnosophistæ*, or banquets of the learned, about A.D. 228.

[7] A.D. 170.

Indeed, a marvellous vitality seethed in the blood of even the later Alexandrians. Under the Egyptian sun all that has any inherent capacity for growth must thrive luxuriantly. The quick blood of the Greek throbbed here with a more rapid pulse; but Greek vivacity degenerated to an insatiable craving for civil revolution, the spirit of enterprise to rash temerity, energy to a fevered struggle and contention for wealth, and the wit of the Greeks to reckless and frivolous mockery, which too often met with a sanguinary revenge. At the same time the sources of wealth, in the city which the Romans so often laid under contribution, seemed to be so inexhaustible that it was asserted on the shores of the Tiber that the Alexandrians

NIGHT ON THE RED SEA.

possessed the secret of making gold. And yet they enriched themselves in a very natural way; the exports of the produce of Egypt—the granary of the ancient world—lay in their lands; all the paper needed alike in the East and the West was prepared from the Papyrus, indigenous to Egypt, and had to pass through Alexandria; all the treasures of the interior of Africa—ivory, ebony, ostrich-feathers, and the gaudy fells of beasts of prey—were discharged on the banks of Lake Mareotis, and either carried in barques by way of the navigable canal to the harbour of Eunostus, or forwarded to the great mart on the quay of the larger harbour. Enormous profits also poured into the merchants' coffers from their dealings with Arabia—the land of spices—with the Somali coast, Ceylon, and the ports of Malabar and India, whence costly rarities were brought for which the luxurious Romans paid insane sums. The most valued were diamonds, and next to them pearls, and a pound of silk was exchanged against its weight in gold. The fleets sailed from

Myos-Hormos at the season of the longest nights, down the Red Sea, and returned usually by the next December. The wares were disembarked at Berenice, conveyed by beasts of burden to Coptos on the Nile, and then forwarded by ship down the river to Alexandria. Here merchants from all nations awaited their arrival, but most found their way to Rome. The business done in the inner harbour of Lake Mareotis was more important than that of the maritime port, where the exports far exceeded the imports in quantity and value.

OLD EGYPTIAN VASE.

The industrial activity of the Alexandrians was as restless as it was successful. When Hadrian passed some time among them, he wrote a letter to Servianus[1] which has come down to us, and is of great value, first, because it shows that even in his time the Christians—whom indeed he did not distinguish from the worshippers of Serapis—were a conspicuous body, and also for the picture that the emperor cannot forbear sketching of the activity of the Alexandrians, whom, however, he describes as a frivolous, capricious, refractory, and worthless community, running after every new rumour. "Their city [Alexandria]," he says, "is wealthy, splendid, and industrious; no one lives there in idleness. Glass is made there; some work in paper-making, others in weaving linen, and all the busy population seem to exercise some handiwork. The gouty, the blind, even the crippled find something to do. They all have but one God [Mammon?]. Christians, Jews, and all nationalities worship him. It is a pity that the manners of the city are so corrupt, for by its importance and size it is worthy to be the capital of all Egypt."

The emperor's praise was as well founded as his blame. Gibbon says very justly of the Alexandrians that they united the vanity and instability of the Greeks with the superstition and obstinacy of the Egyptians. Perfect peace in the city was rare after the time of the Ptolemies, and quite unknown after the introduction of Christianity. The most trifling cause — a temporary lack of beasts or of grain, an oversight as to some customary greeting, an

GEM, WITH PORTRAITS OF PTOLEMY PHILADELPHUS AND ARSINOË, DAUGHTER OF LYSIMACHUS.

[1] Given in Flavius Vopiscus' Life of Saturninus.

error as to precedence in the public baths, or some religious dispute, at all times sufficed to stir up a tumult among the vast populace, whose vengeance was at once furious and implacable.

It is amazing to note what this hot-blooded, superstitious, and restless race was capable of in industrial produce, not to mention the mechanical inventions of such men as Ctesibius[1] and Heron,[2] who devised their automata in the peaceful seclusion of the Museum, such as *clepsydra* (or water-clocks), hydraulic engines, organs, and the like, and discovered the power of steam. Alexandrian woven stuffs were famous throughout the world,—from the coarsest horse-cloth to the most gorgeous hangings covered with artistic embroidery—from white cotton to the most gaily-lined silken robes. Their ship-building was the most perfect then known, and the carriages which the Alexandrians used in their promenades through the streets were not less famous than their fine cabinet-work. The tables which they made of thya[3] wood, with feet of ivory, were purchased for as much as 1,400,000 sesterces (about £10,500). The engraved and incised works in the finer and baser metals were carried to the highest pitch of perfection in Alexandria, and of all the gems that have been preserved to our day the finest were executed in Alexandria. In goldsmiths' work and the setting of jewels for ornaments, cups and vases, as well as in the fabrication of arms, beautiful specimens were produced, as also in glass-blowing, an art which was brought from Alexandria into Italy. Even glass mirrors, window-glass, and coloured glass Mosaic (millefiori)—a sort of work previously known to the ancient Egyptians—were produced here, and the Alexandrians devoted great attention to grace of form in their vases of artificial crystal. We shall presently take the opportunity of speaking of the arts of masonry in Egypt, and of the manufacture of papyrus, but must now make an end of our wanderings through heathen Alexandria, the magnificent burial-place of the great and splendidly endowed Conqueror whose name it bears.

[1] A.D. 251. [2] A.D. 284.

[3] The wood of *Callitris quadrivalvis*, one of the Cupressinæ. A minute and interesting account of the tree is given in "A Journal of a Tour in Morocco," by Hooker and Ball. App. D, p. 389.

HEAD OF SERAPIS, AND ZODIAC.

MODERN ALEXANDRIA.

A TRAVELLER named Norden, visiting Alexandria in the middle of the last century, compared it to an orphaned child who had inherited nothing of its father's possessions, but only his name. The traveller who at the present day goes down to the swarming quay of Alexandria, where steamships of every nationality lie at anchor—who surveys the enormous new buildings in the harbour—who walks through the splendid quarter of the Franks, and in the afternoon follows the string of carriages which drive through the Rosetta Gate, the old Canopic Gate, out into the country, would think this judgment too hard, and would be inclined to believe that not only the name, but a good share of the wealth of the famous father, had been handed down to the orphan. And yet Norden was right, for in his time the city had only as many thousand inhabitants as it could count hundreds of thousands in the flower of its prosperity. Its commerce had fallen off by degrees; one of the harbours—the only one in which European vessels were permitted to anchor—was so ruinous and insecure that, when Volney visited the city,[1] one single storm of wind wrecked forty-two ships against the harbour quays, and every vessel that entered was in

[1] A.D. 1782.

danger of running aground; while the other—now called the old port—which Turks only might enter, was, with true Oriental indifference, being utterly ruined, ballast being constantly thrown overboard, and gradually choking it.

The population was pauperised and wretched; dearth affected every necessary of life; even water, that most indispensable requisite, was wanting when the season of the inundation was over, and the Nile ceased to supply the cuttings which connected it with the city. The houses were low and squalid; nothing was to be seen in the market but dates and flat round cakes of bread, and the streets were choked by rubbish and ruins. The howl of the jackal and the screech of the owl disturbed the night, and on the neglected fortifications hardly four cannon were to be found in a proper place and condition. At the beginning of this century the great city founded by Alexander was perishing of inanition and want; its life and wealth had vanished; but the last quarter of the century finds it healthy and thriving, the sick man is convalescent. Let us see how it happened that the tree lost its first bloom, and how a new spring has caused it to blossom again.

ISIS SUCKLING HORUS.

Within the first century after the birth of the Saviour, Christianity had extended rapidly throughout Alexandria and the Nile valley. It is believed that St. Mark the Evangelist himself preached the new doctrine there, and the Egyptians were better prepared to receive it than any other nation of antiquity. They had been accustomed for ages past to turn their thoughts to a future life; to regard this world as "a tabernacle," and the next world as man's true home. The initiated among the priesthood worshipped the One God, whom they declared to the people under many names and forms. They represented the course of life under a beautiful myth, in which the hero triumphed over death, darkness, and sin. The images of Isis, with the child Horus at her breast, are the first representations of a divine mother and child, and repentance and penitential exercises were familiar to the Egyptians.[1] In Alexandria, even, there were cells attached to the temple of Serapis, in which world-weary souls secluded themselves from the turmoil of life;[2] and a Roman satirist ridicules the pious ladies among the votaries of Isis who allowed the priests to inflict on them any penance, even bathing in the river in midwinter, as a punishment for pleasant sins. This readiness to do penance, which was foreign to the pagan Roman spirit, won many disciples to Christianity on the shores of the Nile. Among the numerous Hebrew inhabitants of the city, too, it spread rapidly, for the cold theism of the Jews had become much modified in Alexandria by the religious and philosophical efforts to which the spiritual leaders of the Hebrew community had devoted themselves—men who had all experienced Greek culture, and who spoke and wrote the Greek language. The religion of the East and the

[1] Figures of the goddess Isis seated, of bronze or porcelain, have been found in great numbers. They are generally of the period of the 26th dynasty, about B.C. 650, and continue till the period of the Roman conquest, B.C. 30.

[2] They were called *en katochê* in Greek, and are mentioned in the Greek Papyri of the Serapeum of Memphis.

COPTIC MAIDEN.

philosophy of the West here solemnised their union. The new doctrine of redemption was received from Palestine with open arms on the Nile, and in Alexandria—the city of philosophical thought and methodical interpretation—its unfixed traditions were cast into a mould and established on a basis which made them hard to refute, and at the same time attractive to the Western mind.

Christianity was born in Palestine, but it was educated in Alexandria.

This is not the place to relate the struggles which the Christian community in Alexandria were forced to carry on against the heathen authorities that ruled them. Those days of persecution came to be known as the Epoch of Martyrs,[1] and many of the noblest blood-witnesses of the Catholic Church were dragged to execution in Alexandria. However, when Christianity was made the state religion, heathendom also had its martyrs; and by the side of the touching figure of Saint Catherine we may well grant a place to the maiden form of the fair philosopher Hypatia,[2] whom Cyril the Bishop caused to be slain by the hands of fanatical monks.

It was as early as the third century after Christ that the Patriarch Thomas ventured to dedicate a church in Alexandria to the Virgin Mary, and in the fourth, after the death of Julian the Apostate, who had vainly attempted to restore the heathen gods to the place they had lost, all Egypt embraced Christianity. But the Gospel of Peace had no power to control the stormy and irrepressible nature of the mixed races of Alexandria, or to cool their hot blood. The unbridled love of rioting possessed by the excitable natives of the great city now took another bent, and displayed itself in other scenes. These arose from questions of creed. Just as in former times they had been ready to seize the sword in petty and worldly quarrels, so now they were prompt to use it when the matters in dispute were shades of dogmatic meaning; and there was no lack of such occasions for its use in this city of disputants, of critics and hair-splitters, who now began to analyse the nature of Christ, just as they had formerly exercised their subtle wits in investigating philosophical systems, grammatical forms, and historic data. A lamentable spectacle! and yet grand in its way; and unique as evidencing how deeply the life of that time was penetrated and permeated by religious feeling.

The most famous of these disputes, and involving the most important consequences, were those as to whether Christ was of a similar or identical nature with God, and whether it was to be received that two natures, or only one—the divine—existed in Christ. The latter view, defended by Eutyches, was also supported by Dioscorus, the patriarch of Alexandria, and his congregation, while at the Council of Chalcedon it was rejected and stigmatised as a heresy. The Alexandrian emperors who governed Egypt, and who submitted to the decision of this council, combated the error of the Monophysites—those, that is to say, who acknowledged only one nature in Christ—but the Egyptians clung to their creed nevertheless, and poured contempt on the followers of the orthodox doctrine, calling them "Melikites," which we may interpret as "King's Men." To this day the native Christians of Egypt, the Copts, are adherents of the Monophysite confession.

The officers and troops of the orthodox emperors persecuted their fellow-

[1] Commencing 20th August, A.D. 281.

[2] Massacred A.D. 416; daughter of the mathematician Theon, and teacher of an eclectic system of philosophy.

subjects of the heretical creed with great cruelty, and these on their part resisted a compulsory change of bishop; sanguinary street-fights, in which the soldiers commonly remained victors, decimated the citizens of Alexandria, where now a new and stormy element was introduced. An enormous number of servants of the Church, contemners of the world, monks and anchorites, came streaming in from all parts of Egypt, which from the end of the fourth century was richer in monastic institutions than any other country of the world.

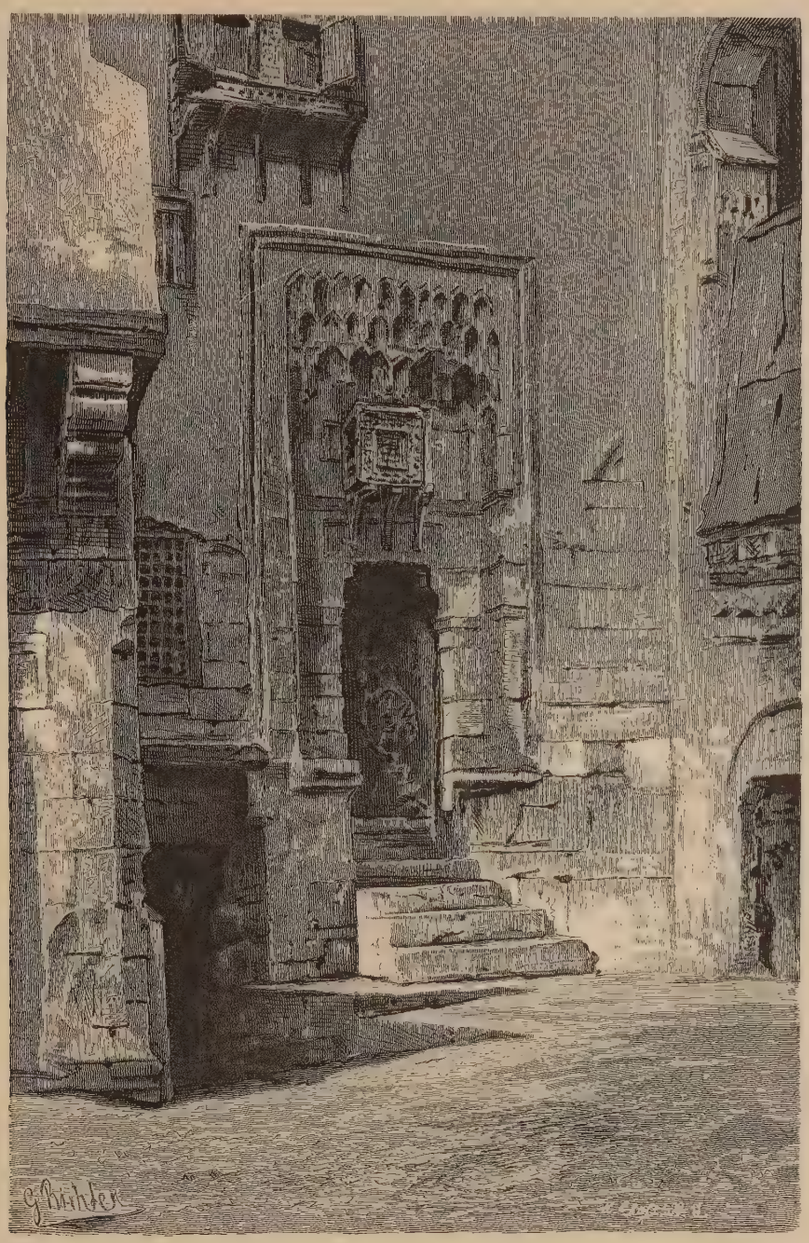
A COPT.

It might appear as if, at that remarkable period, true religious feeling had ceased to exist, and all Christendom was animated by merely the spirit of dogma. It was not, however, really so; only in the works of historians, who at that time had so much to narrate of grand foundations and conversions, of martyrdoms and visions, of fights with word and sword for the faith, no space was found for describing the inner life of Christian homes and families, or the lives of those hermits and penitents who, by an existence full of physical privations and rich in spiritual rapture, silently and sincerely strove for redemption and purification. Many of these had unostentatiously given all their possessions to the poor, in order to withdraw from the world and win Paradise by prayer and mortification.

Orthodox Byzantium was a more dangerous foe to Christian Alexandria than

THE PALM, THE CHARACTERISTIC TREE OF THE EAST.

heathen Rome had been, for it not only demanded the wealth and blood of her sons, but sought, too, to rob her of her noblest and proudest title—the Metropolis of Learning. Besides the heathen philosophers, the greatest Christian teachers of the



COURT OF AN EGYPTIAN HOUSE OF THE TIME OF THE KHALIFS.

time of the empire had lived in Alexandria—Clemens, Origen, and Athanasius. But now even the higher spiritual life and endeavour of the city were extinguished, for Alexandria was destined to escape no possible misfortune.[1]

The Byzantine garrisons were too weak to protect the frontiers of Egypt

[1] Alexandria was decimated and burnt by Narses, A.D. 553.

against the incursions of the marauding desert tribes, and the governors were too avaricious to take due care for the irrigation of the country. The harvests and exports of corn fell short, commerce became stagnant, and the industry of the country was paralysed. Added to these came pestilence and famine, and furious insurrection of the starving citizens, oppressed as they were on all sides. Only a few had been able to preserve the wealth they had inherited from their fathers; among them the converted Jew Urbib, who relieved the sufferings of his starving fellow-citizens with princely liberality.

It was from Byzantium, from the adherents of the opposite confession, the Melikites, that the heaviest blows fell upon the city and the country. What wonder, then, that when a Mohammedan army invaded the Nile valley, not long after the death of the Prophet, those Egyptians who adhered to the Monophysite doctrine should make common cause with the invaders, and finally, obeying the counsel of their Bishop Benjamin, go over to the general of the Khalif to put an end to the dominion of the hated Greeks.[1]

The Egyptian governor of the city, Makaukas, set the bad example to his Monophysite followers, and when the emperor reproached him in a letter, because, in spite of the hundred thousand Greeks whom he commanded, he would rather pay tribute than fight against the Arabs, Makaukas exclaimed: "By God! these Arabs with their handful of men are stronger than we with our multitudes; one man of theirs is equal to a hundred of ours; for they seek death and love it better than life." When he immediately after made peace with the Mohammedan general, he promised him a poll-tax of two dinars[2] for every Egyptian; but he made it a condition that no peace should be made with the Greeks till they were all reduced to slavery and their property confiscated, for that was what they deserved.

But in spite of the secession of the Copts, the Greeks resisted valiantly, and fighting went on for a long time round Alexandria, which was strongly fortified with many towers that mutually flanked each other; till on the 1st of Moharram, in the year 20 of the Hegira,[3] the city fell into the hands of the Arabs.

At that time the inhabitants are said still to have numbered nearly 600,000, besides 70,000 Jews who had all taken flight before the city fell. Of those remaining behind 40,000 were Israelites and 200,000 Greeks. These large numbers are very surprising, and no less so is the estimate given of the amount of property of certain particularly rich Egyptians at that time. One Copt, who was convicted of having betrayed the weakness of the Moslems to the Greeks, was possessed of 13,000,000, and another named Petrus of 12,000,000 dinars.[4]

Amroo,[5] the Mohammedan general, treated the conquered with much consideration. The story has been often repeated that he caused the four thousand baths of Alexandria to be heated during six months by burning the books in the library, in obedience to the orders of the Khalif Omar, who declared that "if they contradicted the Koran they were mischievous, and if they agreed with it they were useless"—but this is an invention of a later period. The great public libraries had been dispersed,

[1] A.D. 640.

[2] Two dinars equal 15 francs (about 12 shillings per head).

[3] December 10th, A.D. 641.

[4] 13,000,000 dinars about £3,900,000; 12,000,000 dinars about £3,600,000.

[5] Also called Amr-ben-el-Aas.

and the most valuable of the books had certainly been carried to Constantinople a long time before Alexandria fell into the hands of the Arabs.

Before the Emperor Constantine finally relinquished Alexandria and Egypt, he sent one more fleet to the Nile. It is said that the Greeks of Egypt appealed to him for aid under the following circumstances. Amroo, being asked by the commandant of a town to what sum the poll-tax was likely to be raised, pointed to the

"PLACE MOHAMMED ALI."

walls of a church, and replied, "If you were to give me a mountain of gold pieces reaching from the foundations to the roof I still would not say 'enough,' for you are our treasury; if we want much, we shall take much, if we want little, we will take little."

They joined battle at Nakyoos. Victory was hardly won by the Arabs, and when they had defeated the Greeks, Amroo had breaches made in the walls of Alexandria, for he had sworn that he would throw the city open on all sides like the house of a courtesan.[1]

All Egypt henceforth belonged to the Arabs; a new culture struck root in its soil, and spread and grew luxuriantly.

[1] The city was taken, after a siege of fourteen months, on the 22nd December, A.D. 640.

The rapidity with which Islam was in those times able to engraft its vitality and its forms on the stock of conquered countries was quite magical. It is true that many of the Coptic communities clung to their old faith with true Egyptian tenacity, but thousands were converted to the religion of the Prophet. Churches and monasteries were destroyed, and slender crescent-crowned minarets stood up high above the towers of the Christian churches. A new and fruitful life soon bloomed in the Mohammedan country. Art and science, commerce and home-trade soared up again;

THE OLD HARBOUR OF ALEXANDRIA.

and the grand results of that peculiar culture and strongly marked period have even left the stamp of their influence on Europe, where, as we shall see, their effects are still felt. Egypt was destined once more to take precedence of all the Oriental nations in the highest and noblest walks of life; but the centre of its power and influence was no longer Alexandria.

Cairo sprang up from the camp[1] that had surrounded the tent, Fostaat, of Amroo, and Omar[2] himself had already passed sentence on the turbulent Greek city, which seemed to him ill-fitted to be the residence of a ruler of Egypt; it was in Cairo that the vice-gerents of the Khalifs and the Khalifs themselves held their court; it was there that the caravans, to whom now the commerce of both the East and West was thrown open, established their emporium; and though Alexandria still served as a port for communication by sea with the West and North, the lion's share

[1] A.D. 641. [2] Omar restored the Nilometer and the canal of the two seas, called the canal of the Prince of the Faithful.

THE BANKS OF THE MAHMOUDEEYEH CANAL.

of the profits was snatched from her by the newly founded Arab metropolis, and by the rapidly increasing ports of the Mediterranean, Venice and Genoa. After the Cape of Good Hope had been doubled, and a new way opened to the Indies, and after the discovery of America, the number of ships in the harbours of Alexandria constantly diminished, and they gradually fell into decay. The Turkish Beys and the overbearing Mamelukes, who, after the incorporation of Egypt with the Ottoman Empire, drained it to the utmost, brought it to utter ruin, and it was, indeed, a beggared orphan when the French army landed here under Bonaparte, who by the splendid battle of the Pyramids[1] made himself master of Egypt, and kept it till Nelson, the English hero, destroyed the French fleet in the bay of Aboukir, a little way to the east of Alexandria.[2]

This is not the place to relate the history of the short period of French dominion in the Nile valley, and the unfortunate issue of the enterprise undertaken by Bonaparte with so much admirable foresight. One thing only must be specially pointed out; the result of the French invasion was not merely that the whole course of the political history of Egypt was diverted into a new channel, but that the attention of European savants was directed to the ancient wonderland of the Pharaohs, and to those gigantic monuments which had endured for thousands of years. By the help of these it has been possible to study one of the most remarkable and ancient epochs of the human race in all its aspects, impulses, and results, and to resuscitate it, as it were, like a man buried alive.

It was as a subaltern in the Turkish army sent against the French in 1802 that the man first trod Egyptian soil who, by his unhesitating energy and statesmanlike talents, was destined to effect a revolution in the position of affairs throughout the Nile valley. Mohammed Ali's name is one of the most illustrious of this century, and he is universally known as the founder of the dynasty to which the present Viceroy, Tewfik Pacha, belongs, and as the victorious hero who, but for the intervention of the European powers, would have gained possession of the throne of Constantinople. But few know all that he did for the internal development of Egypt, or understand that the country owes to him that impetus towards innovation which has proved a blessing in the present, and on which rest all its hopes for the future. To him Alexandria owes its renewed bloom, and it is with good reason that his equestrian statue now decorates the finest piazza—named after him—of the handsomely built Frank quarter.

Mohammed Ali understood that the great designs formed in his restless mind could only be carried into effect by the help of means borrowed from the civilisation of the West. He invited the aid of European engineers and architects, as it was necessary that the old harbour, which he now re-opened to the ships of all nations, should be deepened, extended, and made secure. With the assistance of the most distinguished French scientists he turned his particular attention to the irrigation of the country he governed, and he was not slow to perceive that, for a healthy development of the resources of Alexandria, the city needed above all things a regular supply of water, and a canal to connect it with the Nile.

[1] 21st July, A.D. 1798. [2] 1st August the same year.

As he was the despotic and unrestrained master of all the human labour of the country, peasants from every part of Egypt were put under requisition of forced labour, and a deep navigable water-way was dug, embracing the lake of Edkoo in its wide circuit, and fed by the Rosetta branch of the Nile at Foom el Mahmoudeeyeh. Two hundred and fifty thousand fellaheen were employed in carrying out this undertaking. We cannot but pity these miserable creatures, of whom thousands perished, insufficiently fed or sheltered, and worked beyond their strength; but we must admire the work, which perfectly fulfils its object of conveying the produce of Egypt once more to the harbour of Alexandria, of watering its parched soil, and supplying its inhabitants with the most indispensable necessary of life.

WATERING THE ROADS.

If we now walk along the bank of the canal, it is difficult to believe that hardly fifty years have elapsed since the first sod was turned for its formation. Where the closely-packed Egyptian boats unload, spreading palm-trees grow on the raised banks; and in the vicinity of the city, heavily-laden barques and small steam-tugs lie at anchor side by side with humble boats from the provinces, and elegantly-fitted dahabeeyehs for the pleasure trips of the wealthy. Proud palaces line the banks, and villas in long rows, many of them enclosed in gardens where the vegetation of every zone thrives and flourishes.

The wealth restored to the impoverished city by the construction of this canal nowhere strikes us more impressively than when we pass through the Rosetta Gate in the afternoon, and walk towards its banks. On the Arab and Christian holidays particularly, Fridays and Sundays, as we walk down the road, dusty in spite of the sprinkling of the black watermen, we are met by a crowd of pleasure-seeking citizens, on foot, on horseback, or in carriages. The dusky drivers of the pretty hired carriages, with their capital horses, on these days and at this hour demand double and treble fares, and the sais or out-runner bounds on in front of the millionaire's carriage with bare brown feet, never tiring even when the spirited horses behind him make their swiftest pace. The ladies and gentlemen in the carriages, and most of those on foot, are in European costume; only the Arab tarboush, known to us under the name of "fez"—a red cap with a black silk tassel—holds its own against the European hat. Those who wear it do not remove it in greeting, but instead of airing their heads, wave their hand at an acquaintance. Silks rustle, jewellery glitters, and handsome feathers wave wherever the fair Alexandrians show themselves in public; and there are among them not a few whose husbands can well afford to order their toilets from Paris, their carriages

from Vienna or Milan, and to secure them a box for the Italian opera at the Zizinia Theatre. Immense fortunes have been made here, particularly during the American war. Foreign commerce at the present time enriches enterprising merchants of all nations, and has attracted during the last few years three thousand vessels per annum to the harbour of Alexandria. The export of a comparatively new commodity,

A SAIS, OR RUNNING FOOTMAN.

cotton, has proved particularly lucrative, and the exchange business of the banks of Alexandria is far more considerable than that of the houses of business in the capital. The poor orphan has grown rich again, and its wealth flows in from many of the same sources whence its forefathers filled their treasuries. In the market-place, which in Norden's time was deserted, everything may now be found that can serve to deck the tables of the wealthy, whether Orientals or Europeans. The fruit and vegetable sellers are for the most part Egyptians, but the purchasers are Europeans of all ranks, and among them we meet many a fair and elegant house-wife, followed by her black servant, like a dusky shadow. With the single exception

of Abbas Pacha, who was always inimical to foreigners, Mohammed Ali's successors have followed the example of the great founder of their house, availing themselves of every advance in European culture for the advancement of Alexandria also, and devoting particular attention to those means of communication which keep up its intercourse with Europe and the other parts of Egypt.

Said Pacha, the predecessor of Ismail, had the Mahmoudeeyeh Canal cleared of silt and deepened, and the waters are now kept at their level by enormous forcing-pumps. He completed the railway connecting Alexandria with Cairo, and began the construction of that network of iron ways which overspreads the Delta with constantly increasing meshes, and which now joins the port on the Mediterranean with Suez, and connects all the most important towns of the Delta.

ALEXANDRIAN LADY WITH HER BLACK ATTENDANT.

Said Pacha resided principally in Alexandria, for which he had retained a preference from his earlier life, when he was an admiral of the Egyptian fleet. He lived in his castle of Gabari at the extreme west of the city, on the site of the ancient Necropolis, where now races are run in the European style. The castle is falling into ruins day by day, but it was surrounded by gardens, and there the prodigal and eccentric prince, who was by no means deficient in talent, loved to inspect the manœuvres of his troops. The traces may still be discerned of the iron causeway which he had laid to enable him to overlook the march past of his soldiers without inconvenience from dust; they, in the polished black boots of civilised life, must have suffered fearfully from the metal heated by the sun of those latitudes. He had a railroad constructed to connect his summer palace at Maryoot with Alexandria, and to convey necessaries to the troops which were encamped there under his eye. The twenty-three miles of iron road passed through an utter desert, and had no other purpose whatever. In spite of this and many similar follies, the whimsical and extravagant Governor was open to great ideas; he had been brought up by an admirable instructor, Kœnig Bey, who had not left him ignorant of any of the nobler and more important features of European thought and culture; and history will not forget that it was Said Pacha who encouraged Monsieur de Lesseps' grand scheme of cutting through the Isthmus of Suez to connect the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and who provided the talented and persevering Frenchman with means to carry out his idea. He was not so happy as to live to see the completion

of this undertaking, which has been productive of vast results for the commerce of Alexandria. He died in January, 1863, after great suffering, and his mortal remains rest in a small mosque at Alexandria. Only a few, faithful to his memory, visit the modest mausoleum of the illustrious dead whose next of kin, in consequence of the most unfortunate law of succession then in force, had no claim to the viceregal dignity. This law is now abrogated.

Said's successor, Ismail, was the son of Ibrahim Pacha, the great victor of Nezib, and grandson of Mohammed Ali. The title of Khedive was bestowed on Ismail Pacha, ruler of the Nile country, by the Sublime Porte in 1867. We shall use this Turkish title, which means much the same as the word Viceroy, whenever we have occasion to speak of this man, whose prudence, industry, energy, and unprejudiced judgment raised the outward dignity and internal prosperity of his country in a wonderful degree. We will, in another chapter, more closely investigate the character and influence of Ismail Pacha, and show what enormous difficulties he had to grapple with in carrying out his grand work of education and reformation. He, nevertheless, intended to carry them out, if not to the end, at any rate to a promising stage of progress, if his powers had not failed, and he had not been fettered by external influences. It must suffice here to give a sketch of what Alexandria alone owes to him.

Every one knows that it was the Khedive who brought the cutting of the Isthmus of Suez to its termination, and attracted the attention of the whole world to the success of the enterprise by the splendid ceremonies at its opening; in fact, it was an undertaking from which not only a single nation, but every commercial country, has derived benefit. For, so soon as the first vessels had navigated the canal, new shipping companies were called into existence, and at the present time Austrian and Italian, English and French, Russian and Turkish lines of steamships are in regular communication with Alexandria. Every year saw an increased number of ships entering the ancient harbour of Eunostus, and the Khedive undertook to make it in every respect one of the first ports, not of the Mediterranean only, but of the whole world.

It is at El Meks, to the south-west of the city, that the works are situated in which an enormous number of blocks of stone are squared, while others are hewn in the quarries of the rocky hills that coast the river. The breakwater is a work which is exceeded in magnitude only by a few structures remaining from the time of the Pharaohs. It lies opposite the little island of Pharos, and extends for a distance of above three kilomètres (more than a mile and three quarters), forming an obtuse angle towards El Meks, and many millions of tons of rough and squared stone have been used in constructing it. A second mole, almost a kilomètre[1] long, is connected with the old station, and that and the new quay on the western side of the Heptastadium, east of the harbour, give the port altogether an extent of open space and a degree of safety that it can scarcely have had even under the Ptolemies.

A great deal has been said in Europe about the enormous sums spent, with true Oriental recklessness and lavishness, by the Egyptian Government during the

[1] Rather more than half a mile English (4 furlongs 212 yards 1 foot 9½ inches long, or more than 1,000 yards).

last decade, but too little has been thought about the millions which have been applied to great public enterprises, and which, like an acorn dropped in the ground, will bear full interest only to future generations, though already Alexandria has profited by them more than any city in Egypt. Protected against

MOSQUE OF SAID PACHA.

all storms by efficiently constructed bulwarks, and against every foe by strong fortifications, ships of all nations are here invited into a sheltered harbour, in which the largest fleets may find room. Here is the terminus of all the railways which directly connect the city with Cairo, Suez, and Rosetta. Here converge the telegraph-wires, by which it communicates with almost every part of the world, even with the interior of Africa. A well-constructed aqueduct supplies the houses of the citizens, and an elaborate system of gas-pipes ramifies through even the remotest

parts of the city, providing light during the night. It is only to the narrow alleys of the Arab quarter that this truly European illumination has not yet penetrated; for when it was introduced there it filled the sons of the soil with such alarm as for a long time made it the ruling theme of conversation. The main thoroughfares are paved, and are furnished with side-walks. That love of planting trees which the Khedive inherited from his grandfather, Mohammed Ali, also proved advantageous to Alexandria, and a special office of health takes zealous care of the resuscitated city.

WHAT WILL COME OF IT ALL?

Several hospitals exist, and owe their foundation to that benevolence which characterises not only the Christian, but also the Arab religion. Even in the Egyptian infirmaries, strict regulations, imported from the West, maintain a discipline which multiplies tenfold the value of the gifts of the benevolent. Physicians of every creed exercise their calling in the hospitals of Alexandria, and the traveller, as he walks through the city, constantly finds the Christian cross adorning a church or chapel in close contiguity to the crescent crowning a mosque. Copts and Greeks of both confessions, Roman Catholics and Protestants, Anglican and Presbyterian congregations, have here their places of worship; and the Jews perform their devotional services in stately synagogues, unhindered by the Moslems, whose mosques in Alexandria are, in fact, little worthy of notice.

PROTESTANT CHURCH AT ALEXANDRIA.

It is greatly to the credit of the successors of Mohammed Ali that they not only do not interfere with the religious observances of the colonists of other creeds, but have aided them in erecting their places of worship with gifts of building ground. Mohammed Ali gave up sites of considerable extent to the Roman Catholics, and the little Protestant Church, in which a German pastor preaches to a German congregation, stands on a plot of ground given to the Evangelical German colonists by Said Pacha. It stands on the shore of the so-called New Harbour, which ships can no longer enter, and on the soil of the ancient Bruchium. Services are also held here in French for Protestants who are neither Germans nor attached to any English denomination.

This German church was dedicated in 1866, on the Emperor William's birthday, and the congregation were liberally assisted in establishing it, not only by the

A YOUTHFUL FOLLOWER OF THE PROPHET.

King of Prussia, as he then was, but by the Khedive himself. Erbkam, who is now dead, and who during his lifetime was well known to every lover of ancient Egyptian art, designed the little church in the Romanesque style. M. Lüttke, author of a work on Modern Egypt, was the first minister, and he could say with

SARRÂF, OR MONEY-CHANGER.

justifiable pride, at the termination of the work to which he had contributed much good counsel—"This neat little edifice, in connection with its situation in the broad harbour of Alexandria, which opens out on the broad blue sea, makes a pleasing and touching impression, and the Crown Prince of the German Empire (then Crown Prince of Prussia), like many other foreign visitors, felt this when he visited it in 1869, and gave lively expression to his sentiments."

As we have seen, people of every creed have found a home in Alexandria, and labour and toil in complete freedom, not only in religious matters, but in

practical life also—practical life which, unfortunately, absorbs the lion's share of all the powers of colonists and natives alike. That life for the ideal, that struggle for intellectual wealth, that nurture of science and art which ennobled Alexandria of yore, have not accompanied the resurrection of the great metropolis, and yet the circumstances of the new city appeal to us in many particulars as a reflection of ancient Alexandria. Just as the old town remained a Greek colony in the midst of Egyptians, so the new has received little of that impress of the Mohammedan mind which is visible throughout the rest of the Nile valley. The Alexandria of our day, like its predecessor two thousand years ago, has developed from an unimportant Egyptian town, by the influx of enterprising Europeans—chiefly Greeks and Italians—while the native Egyptian element has been thrust into the background. Now, as then, the citizens of Alexandria may well be called a turbulent and mixed population of South European stamp, and the saying of Hadrian, in writing to Servianus, "They all know but one God [Mammon]," is only too true of the greater part of the traders living here now, who far more often strive to attain the goal of their lives, a large and rapid fortune, by some happy hit in a risky speculation than by quiet industry.

ARABIAN CEMETERY.

WINDOW OF THE HAREM.

Of course there are not wanting most respectable representatives of the merchant class, English and French, German and Swiss, Hellenes and Levantines; but the man who ventures into the Greek drinking shops, and their innumerable gaming hells, will meet with the very dregs of society—than whom nothing more worthless, dissolute, and reckless can be found in any great city.

The Jewish community plays an important part in New, as it did in Old, Alexandria, and counts many wealthy men among its members. A great part of the exchange business is in the hands of Hebrews, as we may perceive from the names of the most important firms, or by a glance at the humble money-changer, the Sarrâf, who conducts his business squatting behind a little table at the corner of a street.

Any one really desirous of studying Oriental life will not find what he seeks

in this centre of commerce; rather will he pack up at once and turn southwards to the beautiful city of the Khalifs; for in Alexandria the Arab is at home only in the poorest and humblest quarters, and the cemeteries where his dead lie at rest are almost more numerous than the spots where he dwells while living. Also the Turks pass for little. Many of them live in the island of Pharos in houses which, though humble indeed, are often pleasant enough. They are overlooked by the lordly palace of the Khedive, which is situated on the tongue of land known as Ras-et-Teen (the Cape of Figs), and was erected by Mohammed Ali and restored by Ismail Pacha. But even this building, though the sea washes round it in imitation of the

PALACE OF THE KHEDIVE.

Seraglio at Constantinople, is devoid of character, and would hardly be suggestive of the East but for the adjoining harem and its gardens. Here the inquisitive European need not hope to catch a glimpse of fine eyes half hidden behind a veil and trellis, though he may indeed meet with one of the eunuchs that are never absent from an Egyptian establishment of any pretension, as guardians of the ladies, and on whom, in ancient times, the highest offices constantly devolved in all Oriental countries.

Eunuchs were by no means first employed by the Mohammedans; on the contrary they were introduced from Byzantium, for the Mohammedans under the early Khalifs assigned a high social position to women, and Byzantium always returned with interest the abuses she had borrowed from the East. It is now long since eunuchs have been excluded from offices of state; but, although they all belong to

the black races of the upper Nile, and their repulsive and sleepy aspect gives small indication of it, they are said to be to the present day conspicuous for their prudence and energy, and they generally manage the household they belong to. In Cairo we as often meet them as here we rarely see them.

If in Alexandria we do at last succeed in realising that we are indeed in the East, the next instant something carries us back to Europe; and the time is not far distant when Western life will have destroyed the last trace of Oriental life in this spot. Only two unmistakable tokens survive—one in the vegetable and the

EUNUCH.

other in the animal kingdom—the Palm and the Camel; and these will uphold the Eastern character of Alexandria when the last minaret of the last mosque shall have disappeared.

Whoever remembers Egypt remembers its palms, those noble trees with slender fibrous stems, standing up like pillars, with umbrageous crowns that spread out like shading roofs; fair daughters of the East that are the ornament of the fertile land, and that break the monotony of the desert; under whose shade it is so delightful to rest, whose crowns are stirred by the lightest breath of wind, and at whose feet, when they form a grove, light and shade play in incessant variety. Wherever Islamism has penetrated this tree has followed it, the tree of which the Prophet himself said, "Honour the palm, for it is your maternal aunt; on the stony soil

THE JEWEL OF THE HAREM.

of the desert it offers you a fruitful source of sustenance." The pious revere it as a gift bestowed by God on the lands of the faithful, and wantonly to injure a palm-tree would be a deadly sin. Throughout the East there are no gifts

PALMS.

of nature more useful than the palm-tree and the camel, and how incomparable the blessings which they secure to the Oriental seem in his eyes is sufficiently proved by the common saying, "The palm is the camel and the camel the palm of the desert."

Every part of this beautiful tree, from the root to the summit, is of value. Its trunk is in many parts of the East the only building timber; mats and ropes are

woven of its fibre; of its branches roofs, beds, seats, cages, and baskets are made; and it is well known that it affords an abundance of nutritious food in the heavy clusters of fruit that ripen in the autumn under its crown of leaves.

The precious trees, male and female (for the palm is dicœcious), are tended with care, and even the ancient Egyptians distinguished them as the father and mother trees, and understood the art of assisting nature and of transferring the pollen to the female flowers by hand.

As the Swiss when abroad pines for his native mountains, so the Arab longs for the palms of the East. The first Ommeyyade Khalif in Spain could not exist in his new home without the lordly palm, and had a young tree brought from Syria, which he planted in the garden of his country-house at Ruhzafa, near Cordova. He gave utterance to his home-sick longing for the tree of his native land in the following expressive verses :—

"Oh! Palm, like me a stranger here,
An exile in the alien west,
Driven from home and dispossessed—
But, ah! thou'rt mute, nor canst thou shed a tear.

"Happy to have no sentient soul!
Heart-ache like mine thou canst not know;
Could'st thou but feel, thy tears would flow
In yearning love and grief, without control.

"Aye, home-sick tears for Eastern groves
That shade Euphrates; but the tree
Forgets; and I, compelled to flee
By hate, almost forget my former loves."

GATHERING DATES.

The palm-tree so pathetically sung has been the parent of thousands of descendants, which at this day wave their broad crowns in the breeze of Southern Spain.

We, at the present time, find it as difficult to think of Egypt without camels as without palms, and yet the "patient ship of the desert" was not naturalised on the shores of the Nile until a comparatively late date. It was not used in the time of the Pharaohs, though we find it mentioned on the monuments,[1] and the conquerors of Western Asia often met with it in their expeditions. Even in the other parts of North Africa and in the Sahara, from which in our minds the camel is an inseparable feature, it was not in general use till after the Christian era. Barth has proved

[1] As the *kamaru* or *kamalu*, as early as the thirteenth century B.C. It does not appear on the coins till the time of Hadrian, A.D. 130, although it is mentioned as introduced by Ptolemy, B.C. 304. In Assyria the two-humped camel of Bactria was known in the time of Shalmaneser, B.C. 850, and the one-humped at the time of Assur-bani-pal or Assur-bani-habla, B.C. 627.

SHEARING CAMELS.

that even the Phœnician merchants of Carthage, whose caravans traversed the desert in many directions, made no use of this humped beast of burden.

They were introduced into the Nile valley in thousands by the Arab hosts, and followed them in their advance to the West. The facility with which they become naturalised wherever the necessary conditions exist is shown by the history of the last few years. After the Crimean war Tartars migrated with their camels into the Dobrudscha, where that animal was previously unknown, and a short time since Von Kremer found it completely naturalised, and saw Tartar wagons in Galatz drawn by camels which had crossed the frozen Danube.

In Egypt the humped beast bears all kinds of burdens, draws the plough, drives the water-wheel, scours the desert with Bedaween or pilgrims, and yields milk to its owner, as well as its wool, which serves for weaving both coarse and fine materials. We shall often meet with the camel in the course of our further journeying, and shall have much to say about it, and need only add here that it is constantly employed in all sorts of ways in Alexandria. At Ramleh, to the east of the city, where the Khedive's summer palace is situated, and whither the Alexandrians adjourn in the hottest months for the sake of the sea-breezes, there are encampments of Bedaween who keep herds of camels in order to sell their valuable hair to the merchants and weavers of the city.

A SILK EMBROIDERER.

Of all the industrial arts of the early days of Alexandria one only still survives, that of fine embroidery. In the time of the Khalifs this had reached an admirable pitch of perfection. In those days the European princes procured their more costly dress-stuffs from the East, and even the coronation mantle of the Roman-German emperors, preserved in the treasury of Vienna, was worked by Arab hands; indeed the "Tirâz," an arabesque representing in its artistic curves the name and titles of the illustrious wearer, is conspicuously embroidered upon it. Venice and Genoa obtained their silk-stuffs from Alexandria, and all the gold thread required in Europe in the days of chivalry—when the nobility loved gorgeously embroidered garments—was brought from the East, where it was made, as is now known, of finely divided threads of the intestines of animals killed for food. The island of Cyprus was the emporium for these wares, of which great quantities were used in the silk embroidery

done at Alexandria. We do not know whether it was in Alexandria that Said Pacha, the predecessor of Ismail Pacha, had his large state tent constructed; but it was made of heavy silk stuff covered with rich embroidery, and was so large that a hundred guests could be accommodated in it, its height being more than fifty feet. Embroidery and weaving are at this day the arts best understood in the East, and are practised by men as well as by women. One of the prettiest blossoms in the Arab anthology is addressed to a girl weaving. The last verses run as follows :—

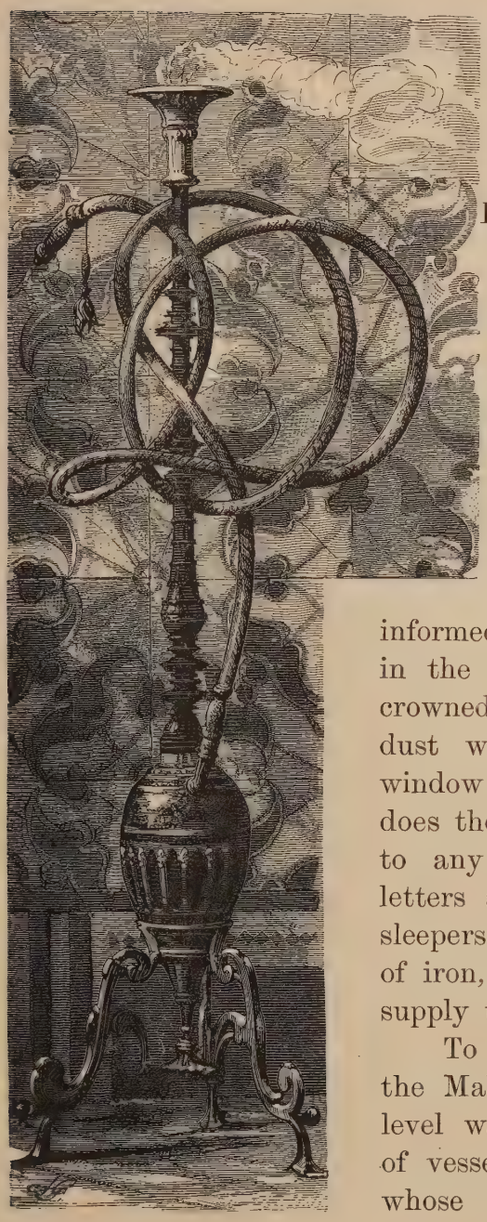
"There at her loom her task she plies,
Through quivering threads the shuttle flies;
So thrill and tremble—while he sighs—
The fibres of the poet's heart.

"I watch her often as she sends
The weft across the warp, and bends
To tie or cut the floating ends—
Fate-like—and sports with every heart.

"Or, tangled in the ravelled snare
Of threads, sometimes I must compare
The maid to some wild fawn or hare
Caught by the cunning hunter's art."

The weaving of the East is still in high repute, but it is not what it formerly was, and the same is true of the embroidery; but both arts will continue to flourish so long as the Arabs retain their delight in gorgeous garments and fine carpets, and their wives love to cover their little feet with richly embroidered slippers, on which, among the gold, here and there gleams a pearl or a precious stone.

We are now on the threshold of the mysterious East, but its secrets will not be unlocked to us in half-European Alexandria. Away, then, to the south! through the Delta—"that verdurous fan," as the poet says, "with Cairo sparkling like a costly diamond on the handle."



THROUGH THE DELTA.

DIRECTLY the signal is given, with a shrill whistle we are off to the south by the railway. The houses and villas to our right, the morocco cushions on which we sit, the shape of the little tickets, the long wires running by the way-side, which bring men's thoughts into closer communication than the railway does their cities, the look of the locomotives and carriages—how European it all is! Aye, and the machines are fed with coal, ordinary black coal, and not with fragments of mummies, as an American author informed his readers not long since. And yet we are in the East. Palms are waving in the breeze, crescent-crowned minarets stand up against the sky, and the dust which pours in only too freely through the open window is genuine and unadulterated desert sand. Nor does the brown face of the guard under its tarboush belong to any European, and on the ticket there are Arabic letters and numbers, side by side with the French. The sleepers of the rails, too, are peculiar, for they are made of iron, the valley of the Nile being too poor in timber to supply them of oak.

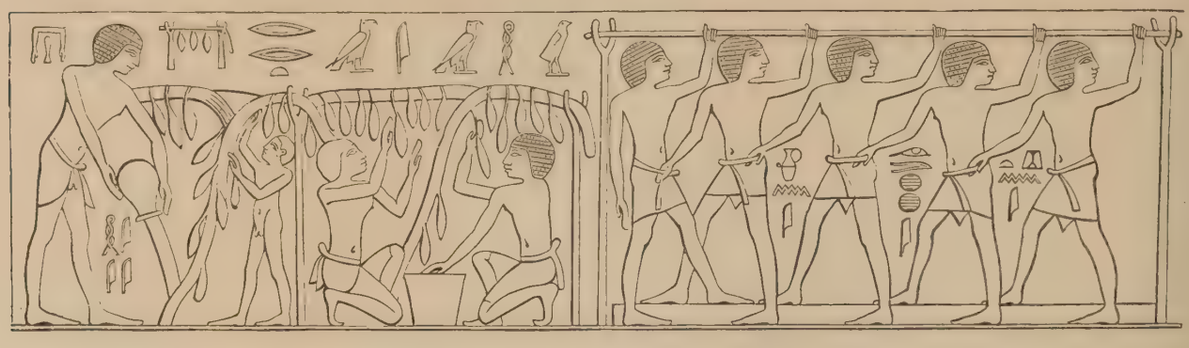
To our left we see the sails of the ships that navigate the Mahmoudeeyeh Canal; on our right lie the brackish, level waters of Lake Mareotis, where formerly thousands of vessels found deep and commodious anchorage, and on whose shores—in those ancient times with which we

have sought to make the reader familiar—houses and vineyards stood in fair array.

"And Thasian vines there are, and Mareots white,"[1]

sings Virgil. Strabo celebrates the Mareotic wine as keeping to a great age, and Athenæus, who had drunk it at many a feast in Alexandria, praises its pale colour and its delightful *bouquet*, and says it is light and wholesome, and does not affect the head. Horace, too, sings of the juice of Mareotic grapes, which, like all the better vintages of Egypt, grew on such spots on the shores of the Nile as were never invaded by its inundations, or overlaid by the rich alluvium they deposited.

In tombs of the very earliest date we find pictures exhibiting the processes of vine-culture among the ancient Egyptians. An example is here given, but we



ANCIENT EGYPTIAN REPRESENTATION OF THE VINTAGE. (*From a Tomb at Sakkara.*)

shall meet with many. Some of the vintagers are busy gathering the clusters from the vines, while others tread out the must. Above them is written, "Vintage of the grapes of the estate." The name of the noble possessor was Ptah-hotep, and he lived about 5,000 years ago, at the time of the building of the Pyramids. Wine is no longer produced on the shores of Lake Mareotis, though many ruined walls remain on its banks, which the Arabs, with a reminiscence of old traditions, call "wine-presses." In the rest of the Delta excellent grapes are grown, and, which is curious, not on vine-stocks, but still on arbour-like espaliers, as in the time of the Pharaohs. The wine-forbidding creed of Islam has interfered with the manufacture of wine; the cultivation of the grape has died out, and though the Egyptian grapes might very likely prove excellent for the purpose, none are ever pressed. They are of very good flavour, ripening in June and July, and are sold with other fruit in the markets.

Meanwhile we are being hurried onwards. Once more a bright sheet of water gleams to our left. This is the lake of Aboukir, so called after a miserable fishing-village on a little promontory to the west of Alexandria; but its name deserves, as few others do, to be held famous and sacred. The greatest sea-fight of the last century was fought opposite Aboukir, when, on the 1st of August, 1798, the British hero Nelson succeeded in destroying the French fleet under the command of the brave but hapless Admiral Brueys.

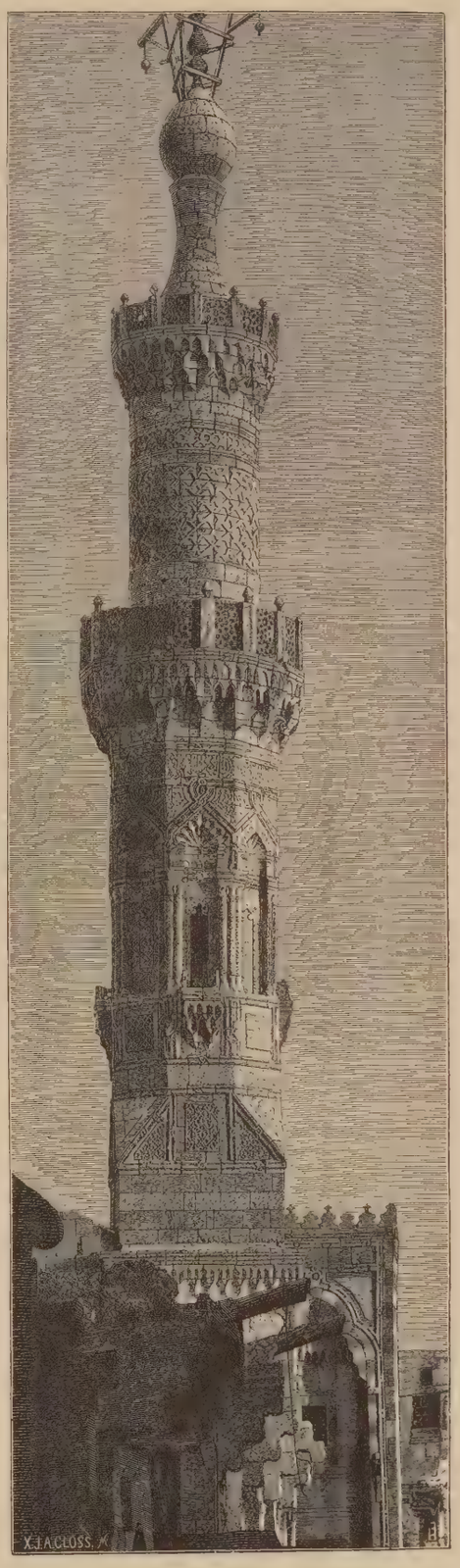
[1] Georgic II., 9. Blackmore's translation.

This is not the place to lay before the reader the varying fortunes of the extraordinary war which was carried on in Egypt against England; but how can we fail to recall, in sight of the waters of Aboukir, that battle, in which laurels were won alike by the conquerors and the conquered, while death gathered so rich a harvest, first at this very sea-fight, and subsequently in 1801, when the British besieged Alexandria? A hundred and fifty villages and hamlets were then wiped off from the face of the earth like an inscription from a tablet, for the English cut through the low hills that protected the fertile country, at a point not far from Aboukir, and let the salt tide through—a terrible ally on their side—flooding the defenceless plain.

Now the lakes are left behind; the level ground on each side of the railway grows greener and greener as we proceed. Damanhoor is the name of the first station, and here the locomotive takes in water. This is the old town of Horus, the Greek Apollinopolis parva, and now the residence of the governor, or Mudeer, of an extensive and fertile province. Grey houses of handsome size stand on the slope of the modest hill behind the station; slender minarets point to heaven here as everywhere, and the white tombstones of the Arab cemetery gleam in close proximity to the iron road. A widow, sitting on the grave of her lost husband, gazes into vacancy, not heeding the train as it rushes by.

It was by a mere chance that no less a man than General Bonaparte escaped joining the dead in the cemetery of Damanhoor. He narrowly evaded the threatened danger of being captured by a division of the Egyptian horse, and when Desaix remonstrated with him on his imprudence, he made the reply which was so strangely justified by subsequent events as to seem almost prophetic, "It is not written above that I should fall into the hands of the Mamelukes; of the English—perhaps."

The foot-prints of a great man leave a significant impression, even in the most inconspicuous spots, and we shall often trace those which were left by Bonaparte and his followers on the land of the Nile.



MINARET OF THE MOSQUE OF WERDANEE AT CAIRO.

The train now carries us through the highly-cultivated plain of the Delta, and we find it hard to believe that the French army found Damanhoor situated in the midst of a desert. It is true that the country we are speeding across is uniform, but the very features that repeat themselves—all, in fact, that meets the eye from Damanhoor as far as Cairo, and on both sides of the railway, bears witness to the extraordinary fertility of the black soil, and to the industry of its inhabitants.

An endless breadth of green fields spreads on every side, interspersed with villages that look from afar like tumuli, or ant-hills, shaded by palms, and not

WIDOW MOURNING.

unfrequently clustering round the rubbish heaps and ruins of some destroyed city. Camels and asses, with their drivers, pass in long files along the dykes that stand up high above the plain; black buffaloes go down to the water to drink, and birds, large and small, far more numerous than in Europe, people the air. Here buffaloes are grazing, there half-naked men and women, in long blue garments, are labouring in a cotton-field. New pictures multiply under our gaze, but we hurry past them; each as it vanishes is merged in the next. But stay! what is that? Sails fluttering—the sheen of water—a broad stream opens on the sight. That is the Nile; not the great undivided main stream of the Nile, but one of the two chief branches by which at the present day its waters join the sea.

The train rattles and thunders across an iron causeway. "Kafr et Zayat" is painted up on the whitewashed station, and we get out, for the fair at Tantah, at which we purpose to assist, does not begin till Friday, and it is well

worth while to stay and inspect more closely the great granary of the ancient world. It was the Delta that filled those ships whose delayed arrival threatened all Rome and Byzantium with starvation, and here, on sites of ancient fame, we may more vividly recall those famous times.

A boat can be hired at once, and wind and stream carry us down the Rosetta branch of the Nile, away to the Delta proper, whose soil the father of history[1] very justly designates as the gift of the river. For a long series of ages man has availed himself of this gift, utilising it in various ways according to the requirements of each period. There was a time when on this island trickling brooks made their way through marshes and barriers formed by the vegetation, tangles of weeds

A DYKE IN THE DELTA AT THE TIME OF THE INUNDATION.

and wreaths of flowers. Islets and spits of land stood out of the water, and the luxuriant and unchecked vegetation which we see represented in the oldest tombs formed hedges, thickets, dykes, and fences, behind which the hippopotamus, the crocodile, and many kinds of reptiles and wild beasts lurked unmolested. Presently the land was occupied by man: Egyptians came to it from the south—Egyptians who, probably, had first crossed from Arabia by the strait of Bab-el Mandeb to settle by the Nile; and from the north came colonies of Semitic origin. The thickets were cleared, the streams made navigable for the canoe and oar, the wild beasts hunted down; and when abundant crops were found to thrive on the first reclaimed elevation, parcel after parcel of land was rescued from the marsh, the waters being forced to keep to their prescribed channels, and to serve the ends of the cultivator. New courses were dug for the stream, which in the time of the Pharaohs discharged itself into the sea by seven mouths. Flourishing

[1] Herodotus.

A PAPYRUS THICKET. (*From a Tomb at Benihassan.*)

cities ere long stood on its banks, and two-and-twenty Zat[1] or Nomarchs governed an equal number of circuits, and watched over the welfare of the district entrusted to them. This division of the Delta existed down to the time of the Romans, and we learn from large and small coins that, at any rate from the reign of Trajan to that of Domitian,[2] each nome or district was free to coin its own money.[3] A very marked individuality, as we shall see, distinguished these districts, and was made more patent by the circumstance that each prayed to its own circle of gods, and worshipped its own sacred animal, of which select specimens were kept in the temples. Images of them were borne in the processions, and, at a later period, stamped on the coins as the arms or badge of the city. The money struck at Mendes, the city of the sacred ram, shows the image of a he-goat; that of the nome Leontopolite, the province of the lion-city, represents the king of beasts, the god Horus having chosen that form when he vanquished the enemies of his father Osiris in the neighbourhood of Tsar, the city of the lion.

The Rosetta branch of the Nile, which we are now navigating, corresponds to the ancient Bolbitine mouth of that river.

The papyrus reed[4] was diligently cultivated on its banks, as on those of every stream in the Delta; on its surface floated the lotus, not only as an ornament, but also as a plant for nourishment; for its seeds, like

[1] Ebers writes *Zat* for *Tsat*, but the nomarch was called *Hat* or *Ha* ("First").

[2] Domitius Domitianus, who usurped the imperial dignity in Egypt, probably about 296 A.D., but was soon deposed by Diocletian.

[3] Although Egypt coined its own currency as late as Domitius Domitianus (who is supposed to be the usurper otherwise known under the name of Achilleus), copper coins inscribed with the names of the nomes or districts were limited to a very short period, the earliest being of the eleventh year of Trajan, A.D. 108, and the latest of the eighth year of Antoninus Pius, A.D. 145. They have been described by Zoega, Tochon d'Annecy, and De Rougé.

[4] The papyrus is represented on the monuments as early as the IVth dynasty, and until the close of hieroglyphic writing. Its name *papu* occurs in an early hieratic text.

BRONZE COIN OF THE LEONTOPOLITE NOME (ANTONINUS PIUS, A.D. 145).

BRONZE COIN OF THE MENDESIAN NOME (ANTONINUS PIUS, A.D. 145).

THE PILOT OMAR.

the pith of the papyrus, were often eaten by the poor. This reed has entirely disappeared, not only from the Delta, but from the whole of Egypt, and has retreated to the south, where it grows abundantly on both the Blue and White Nile. The hippopotamus and crocodile have followed it, though they were still to be found in the Delta under the Arab sway; occasionally specimens of the crocodile are, however, still killed in Upper Egypt. Even the lotus-flower, once the most universally distributed and conspicuous of all the Egyptian water-plants, is become

TOMB OF A SHEIKH AT THE TIME OF THE KHALIFS.

comparatively rare;[1] in its blossom the infant Horus[2] was born, and its graceful form was constantly taken as a model by the architects and artists of Pharaonic times. However, many specimens of both the white and blue lotus may still be found in the stream in the vicinity of Damietta, and Rohrbach saw its poppy-like seeds eaten there.

Under the Byzantine dominion the culture of the Delta retrograded sadly. The Khalifs and the governors under them revived it by their care for the wise distribution of the waters of the Nile, and many a solitary building, in some remote spot rarely trodden by the foot of a European, testifies to the more

[1] Called *Sshnin*, still found, according to Mariette Pacha, in the canals of Lower Egypt.

[2] Horus was born of Isis, but at a later period is seen seated on the lotus. It is said to be a symbol of the new birth of the sun, and of the resurrection

flourishing life which blossomed even there when Islam was at the summit of its glory.

After the fall of the Fatimite dynasty and the death of the great Saladin (Salah-ed-deen)[1] the cultivation of the Delta deteriorated more and more, first under the sway of the Mameluke sultans, and subsequently, after the incorporation of Egypt with the Ottoman Empire by Selim, as the inevitable consequence of the rapacity and greed of the Turkish Pachas and Beys. In process of time the mouths of the Nile became choked with alluvial mud, and the outlet for the discharge of the flood became so small that it was forced to find a new and deeper bed. The eastern or Pelusiac arm found a convenient issue through the Sebennytic channel and into the sea at Damietta; the western or Canopic branch was diverted into an artificial channel, the Bolbitine mouth, now known as the Rosetta branch, down which, in fact, we are this moment travelling. The ancient main branches of the river gradually disappeared entirely; their waters were distributed throughout the interior of the Delta by new subsidiary channels, and it is almost exclusively by these that at the present day the Nile discharges its flood into the sea. Since the time of the Romans the veins, so to speak, that traverse the Delta in all directions have changed beyond all recognition, and that which is true of the river-courses is equally applicable to the vegetation which owes its existence to the Nile. New and foreign products have displaced not the papyrus and lotus only, but in some measure even the grain of the ancient Egyptians; trees of new species overshadow the roads and hamlets, and it may be confidently asserted that all the arable land which was lost to culture under the rule of the Mamelukes and Turks has been reclaimed under the fostering care of Mohammed Ali and his successors, more especially under Ismail Pacha. Bonaparte's saying that under good management the Nile would extend to the desert, and under bad management the desert would extend to the Nile has been verified; and the traveller visiting the neighbourhood of Damanhoor in the month of October—Damanhoor, where the French troops complained loudly that they were starving—will see with double surprise the endless spread of fields of maize as tall as a man, where the golden spathes swelled with grain now await the reaper, though they were sown only a few weeks since.

ON THE ROSETTA BRANCH OF THE NILE.

A gentle southerly air fills the lateen-sail of our modest bark; we squat, Turk-fashion, on the deck, and the fields and meadows, the villages and hamlets glide

[1] A.D. 1192.

past us. There is abundant food for curiosity and not a little for the lover of landscape beauty, as here and there a reach of the river brings graceful groups of palms and shrubs into view, or we see long files of the village women coming down to the river to draw water. The bronze-hued men, women, and children are busy in every field, busy from the rising of the sun till its last level rays glow above the western horizon. The whole earth can show us no more fertile plains than those that lie around us; but few make greater demands on the industry of the husbandman. Only a certain portion of the soil, known as the Rayah fields, is steeped and enriched in the inundation; the higher-lying grounds—Sharakee—demand artificial watering from year's end to year's end, and a considerable amount of manuring also. We frequently meet with fellaheen labouring at the shadoof, or bucket and pole, in Upper Egypt; but here the fields are watered by means of wheels to which water-jars are attached—the sakeeyeh—or by the taboot, a wheel constructed with hollow box-shaped appendages to the spokes. Buffaloes or camels turn the water-works, which are heard clanking from afar; but nowadays the rural quiet is not unfrequently disturbed by the regular snort and rhythmical clatter of a steam-pump on the bank.

ARABIC DECORATIVE PAINTING.

VILLAGE IN THE DELTA.

The water thus raised serves to irrigate here a cotton plantation—of which the shrubs are covered in their season with flowers that much resemble those of the wild rose—or there fields of indigo, hemp, or grain. Broad levels, gay with many-coloured blossoms, are sown with poppy—"the father of sleep" (Aboo'n-noom) as the Arabs

A WATER-WHEEL.

call it—and the beds of pumpkin, melon, and cucumber are resplendent with spherical golden fruit and green cylindrical gourds. Most of the soil yields two or even three crops in the year, but it requires a proper rotation of crops, and in some cases to lie fallow for a time.

We are now approaching a village which, being built close to the shore, invites us to land. The huts of the poorer fellaheen are constructed of Nile mud and roofed

with palm stems and leaves daubed over with earth; the richer peasants live in houses built of sun-dried bricks, while the magistrate of the village not unfrequently has a handsome dwelling of properly burnt bricks. None of the windows open to the street; over many of the doors we see some modest decoration—a torus, a fillet in ovolo, or a spiral ornament. Here some small, coloured china plates have been used as a decoration; there a fancifully designed representation of the king of beasts; there, again, a painted picture of the camel or steam-boat on which the master of the house performed his pilgrimage to Mecca across the desert and the Red

RUINS OF SAIS.

Sea. The order of art to which all these decorative paintings belong—and we shall find them common even in the capital—is certainly that of our first innocence, or of the famous "Livre des Sauvages" by which the Abbé Domenech made himself notorious. Heaps of rubbish choked with weeds, among which cowardly yelping dogs seek a subsistence, lie in the middle of the village street, where we may very likely come upon the rotting carcase of an ass. A minaret towers above the houses and hovels, and a few umbrageous sycamores spread their leafy crowns, the chief ornament of the village; slender date-palms sway in the breeze, the long racemes of the acacia shed their delicate perfume by the side of thorny Sont-trees; evergreen tamarisks, and the carob with its long pods of seeds—the St. John's bread or locust-bean—mingle with that child of distant India, the Lebbek-tree (*albizzia lebbek*), which has been naturalised here only within the last twenty or thirty years.

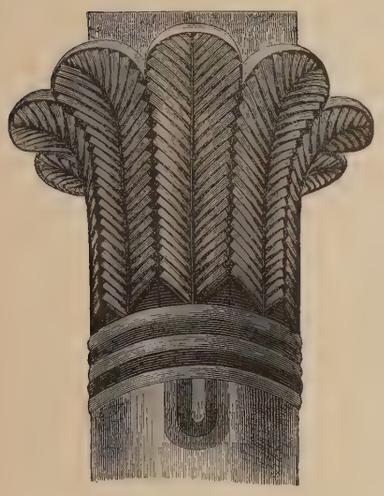
Notwithstanding the extreme poverty of such villages, we rarely meet with beggarly misery, but seldom, on the other hand, with a well-to-do peasantry such as we

should have been justified in looking for in this favoured climate. Most of the land belongs to the Khedive, to the Pacha, or to the Bey; the fellah tills it merely as a tenant or day-labourer, and the taxes he is forced to pay if he owns the soil absorb a disproportionately large share of the profit he derives from it. The patient peasant submits to the oppression which has been his lot ever since the foundation of the dominion of the Pharaohs as to an inevitable law of nature; it reached its culminating point under the Mamelukes and Beys, and it has by no means ceased even under the more judicious rule of the present government, which can spare nothing for ameliorating the domestic condition of the lower classes.

NEITH, GODDESS OF SAIS.

We have reached our first destination in the course of our journey. We will quit the boat and walk inland; presently we come upon a village, and a little to the northward lie some mounds of ruins and a small lake. By the water's edge stand some storks, and a flock of herons allow us to approach within a few yards of them before they turn their graceful necks and spread their wings, soaring away towards the Nile like a white cloud.

We are now among the ruins of the ancient Sais,[1] the splendid residence of Pharaohs and the city of sages, where flourished an academy which was no less famous among the Greeks than among the Egyptians themselves. The little village, crowned by a mosque, which has engrafted itself on the site preserves the proud name of Sais in the form of Sa or Sa el Hagayr.



PALM CAPITAL.

The writer of these pages attempted many years since to realise in his mind's eye the now vanished city of Sais as it was at the time of its splendour,[2] to people its temples with priests and sacred animals, its streets with a living humanity, its palaces with princes and potentates. It is impossible to describe the feelings which stirred his soul as he trod the soil of the venerable spot, while the fallen edifices stood before his fancy, and the illustrious dead rose again before his dreaming spirit. Wandering and searching through the wide extent of ruins he could find no trace of those noble buildings—not a hall, not a room, not a pillar—nothing but an ancient rampart wall, which for colossal dimensions has not its fellow even in Egypt. It consists of huge unburnt bricks, and encloses the meagre remains of the once magnificent city. The citadel with the ancient palace of the

[1] The city of Sais is mentioned under the Vth dynasty, and continues to be so in Egyptian texts till the XXVIth. Its most flourishing period was during this dynasty (B.C. 670 to B.C. 527), when Egypt fell into the power of the Persians, and was conquered by Cambyses. The capital under the XXVIth dynasty was at Sais, and the tombs of that line are said to have been there. Many of its monuments were of basalt.

[2] In "An Egyptian Princess." (Sampson Low & Co.)

MARKET AT DESOOK.

Pharaohs must have stood on yonder mound; that pool at the side of the northern enclosure is the sacred lake on which the history of Isis and Osiris was represented at night, on richly decorated vessels, in a splendid and mystical drama or mystery-play. The lake undoubtedly lay within the precincts of the temple of Neith, the divine mother, the Female Principle in the life of the Cosmos and of man. She was Nature, whose mysterious order must remain a secret to the sons of earth. Her statue bore the inscription, "I am all in all; the Past, the Present, and the Future, and my veil hath no mortal ever raised." It was this sentence which inspired Schiller, the great German poet, with the motive of his "Veiled Statue of Sais." The youth who dared to raise that curtain never revealed what he had found hidden behind it.

> "Senseless and pale,
> Prostrate before the dais of Isis' shrine
> Next day they found him; that which there he saw
> He never uttered."

Here, as in other temples, the image of the divinity or of her sacred animal, the cow, was carved out of one block and enshrined in a sanctuary. The enormous and finely-worked mass of granite, which must have weighed about 880 tons, was brought by order of Amasis from the first cataract at the utmost south of Egypt, and dedicated by him to the goddess; his first name, Se Neth (son of Neith), designated him as her son. This gigantic monument formerly graced the sanctuary of the goddess, with obelisks and sphinxes, with pillars crowned by capitals of palms, and with colossal statues—of which we are told by trustworthy authorities; but the same fate has befallen them all, as well as the palaces, the houses of the citizens and princes, the tombs of Osiris and of the Saite kings. The excavations in the soil of the dead city carried on by Mariette Pacha, the chief commissioner for antiquities in Egypt, have brought to light little that is noteworthy.

They have also yielded but a small number of those stone relics and images which are preserved in all the museums of Europe, and yet we know from records on other monuments that the arts of sculpture in Egypt reached a high pitch of development under the dynasty which had its origin in Sais. We may be specially grateful to the good fortune which gave to the museum of the Vatican one monument as a witness of the most fateful period of Saite history, namely, of the time that followed the Persian conquest of the city. An inscription on this monument relates how Cambyses, after entering the city, at first proved himself gracious to the priesthood, and even caused himself to be initiated into the mysteries of Neith.[1] It was at a later period that the son of Cyrus first showed himself as the frenzied tyrant that is painted in history. Until long after his time the sages of the academy of Sais continued to enjoy the high estimation which they had won in the earliest ages. The greatest medical work of the Egyptians that has come down

[1] Known as the Pastophorus Statue of the Vatican. It has been published in the "Museo Pio Clementino VII.," Plate 6. A complete translation of the whole inscription is given in the "Records of the Past," Vol. X. p. 45, by Mr. Le Page Renouf. It is the narrative of Utahorresenet, an officer of state and admiral who lived under Cambyses and Darius, and differs from that generally received.

to us was written by them; they told Solon of "Atlantis," the engulfed land of the far west, and Plato's account of their discourse makes us admire and wonder at their sagacious observations of the starry heavens. Herodotus sought instruction from them, and legend tells us that Cecrops, the founder of Athens, came forth from Sais. All the Hellenes called Neith—in Egyptian, Neth—Athene; and *AΘHNA*, as has been observed, if read from left to right, yields Neth (*A*)*NHΘ*(*A*). This goddess, who was also worshipped by the tribes of Libya, was represented with a weaver's shuttle on her head, and the linen stuffs, carpets, and other costly tissues of Sais were famous throughout the ancient world.

FOOA.

The external prosperity of Egypt, and the number of her cities and population at no time reached a greater height than under her Saite rulers, who were always friendly to the Greeks.[1] And now! A chill runs through our veins as we look down on the deserted plain and the wretched heaps of grey ruins that surround us. Sais was still important enough to be mentioned as a bishopric in the first centuries after Christ; but after that its existence is forgotten. Its memory, however, must continue to live in the minds of men.

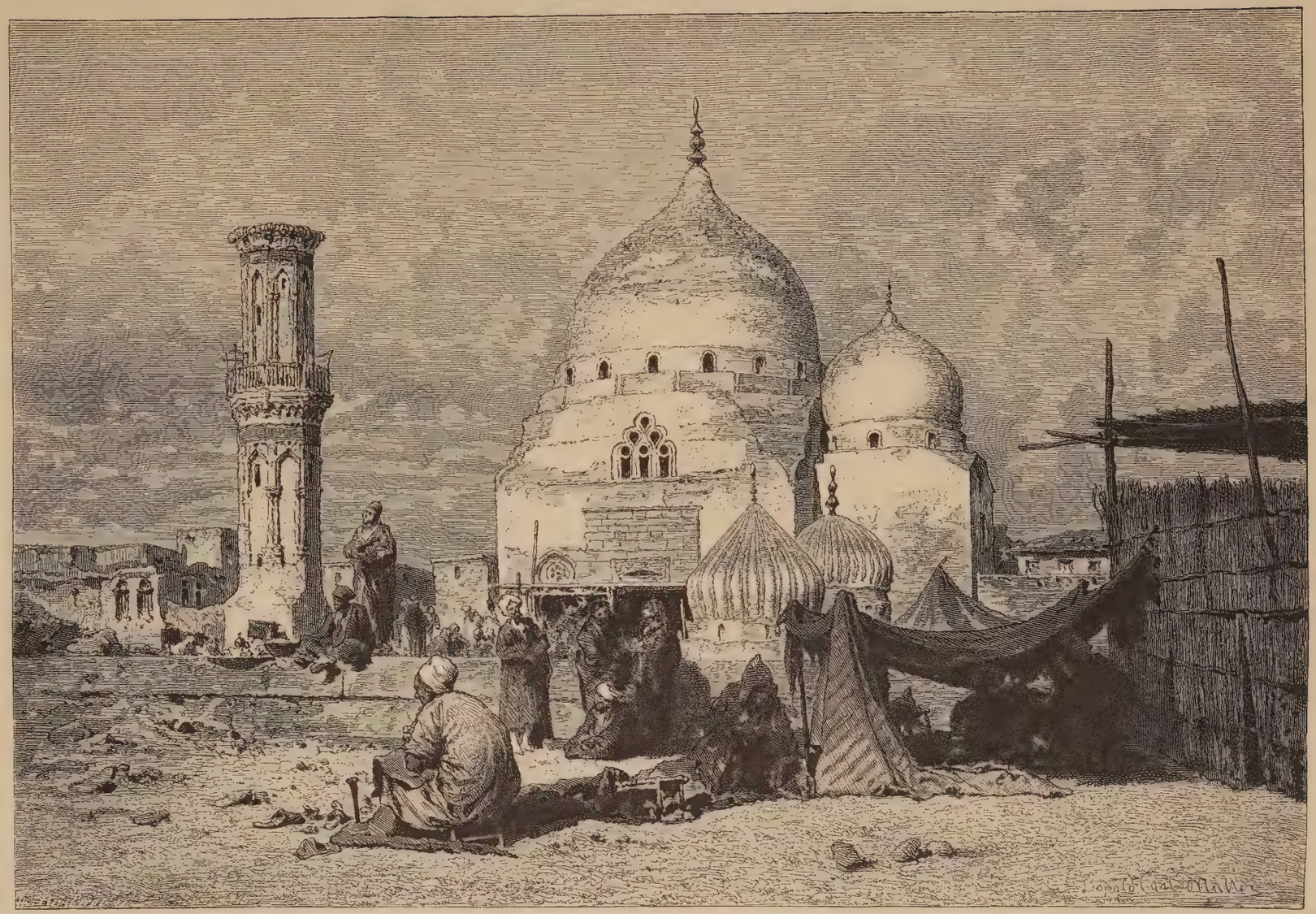
We return to our boat, which carries us still farther to the north. It is now growing dusk, and our thoughts recur to the "lamp-burning," as it was called, the great festival of Neith of Sais, when every citizen lighted his lamp, and a splendid illumination, which extended throughout Egypt, turned the night into day.

OUTSIDE THE GATE OF ROSETTA.

After a voyage of three hours we enter the harbour of the pretty and attractive town of Desook, where we cast anchor. Sleep is short and uneasy on the hard deck-couch, and the Egyptian sun inevitably forces us to open our eyes. Bedaween, who have come to the camel-fair, have pitched their tents on the quay, and with the first morning twilight they are up and stirring, praying with their faces turned towards the East.

The sky flushed, and as the fiery globe arose, glorious and mighty, I was irre-

[1] Psammetichus I. owed his elevation to the Greek troops sent to him by Gyges, King of Lydia. They were Ionians and Carians.



MOSQUE OF THE HOLY IBRAHEEM AT DESOOK.

sistibly reminded for the first time of those sublime verses of the Bible, which so often afterwards recurred to my mind as I watched many an Eastern sunrise :—

HOUSE IN ROSETTA WITH PROJECTING STOREYS.

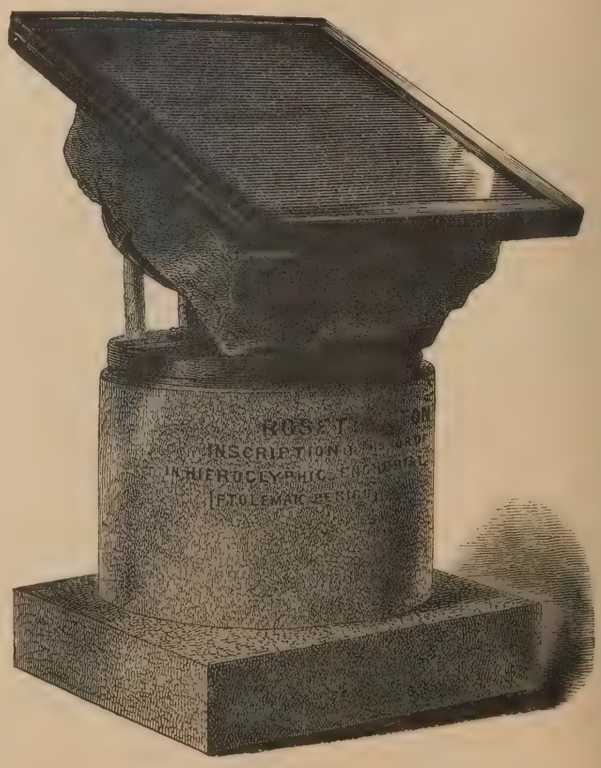
"In them [the heavens] hath he set a tabernacle for the sun: which cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course. It goeth forth from the uttermost part of the heaven, and runneth about the end of it again: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." (Ps. xix. 5, 6, Prayer-book Version.)

The Orientals sometimes seek their beds early, but they never lie late. The prayer at sunrise may on no account be omitted; besides, it is considered unwholesome to let the sun shine on the head of a sleeper, and the cool morning hours are the pleasantest of the day. Hence, every Arab unfailingly performs his first morning ablutions as soon as he can "tell a white thread from a black one." This is the day of the weekly market and camel-fair of Desook, and the peasants and Bedaween are seen standing in picturesque groups in front of the mosque of the Holy Ibraheem, chaffering, bargaining, chatting, or gambling. The noble cupola of the Gamah, or mosque, has been lately whitewashed, for in a short time—only eight days after the Festival at Tantah—the "Molid," or birthday festival of the patron saint of Desook—who is considered second only to the holy Seyyid el Bedawee of Tantah—is to be held, with all the accompaniments of the annual fair, with solemn prayer and recitations of the Koran, with religious dancing and various festivities.

All that here meets the eye is purely and genuinely Oriental in character, and many a picturesque face and form may be seen among the women who bring vegetables and fowls to market, or who come to fetch water for household uses; but our attention is for the moment diverted by our desire to solve this problem: Does Desook occupy the site of the ancient Naucratis or not?

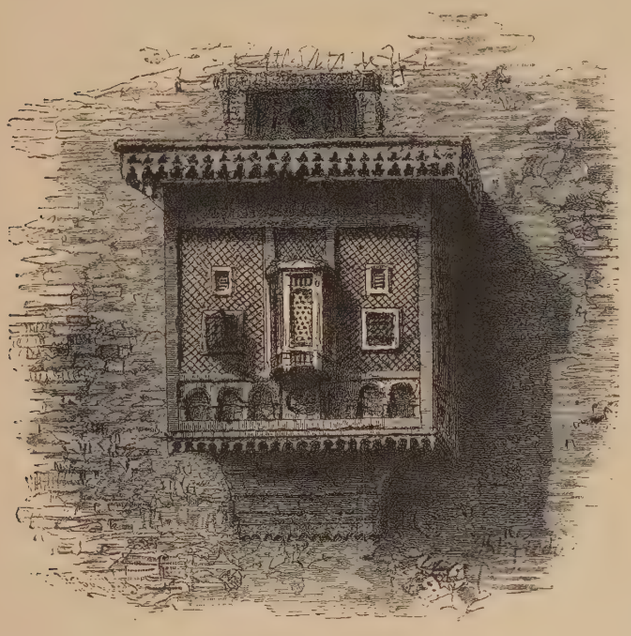
What was Naucratis?

It was the predecessor and precursor of Alexandria—for centuries the only city in Egypt in which the Greeks were permitted to settle and carry on commerce unmolested; it was, in fact, to the Nile valley what the Dutch factory of Desima,



THE ROSETTA STONE. (*In the British Museum.*)

ages later, was to Japan. And the Hellenes were very capable of taking advantage of this privilege. Ionians, Dorians, and Æolians here united in a sort of Hanseatic league, with special representatives and a common sanctuary, the Hellenion, which served as a tie among them; while close to it the Samians raised a temple of their own to Hera, the Milesians one to Apollo, and the Æginetans one to Zeus. This rich colony remained in faithful connection with the mother-country, contributed to public works in Hellas, received political fugitives from that home as guests, and made life fair for them, as for its own children, after the Greek model. The women and the flower-garlands of Naucratis were unsurpassed in beauty, and all Hellas sang the praises of Rhodopis, whom Charaxos, the brother of the poetess Sappho, purchased and married, and whose memory was long revered in legend and story.[1]



WINDOW OF A HAREM.

Naucratis must have stood somewhere near where Desook now stands; but it is in vain that we seek a trace of the ancient days. Not a shard, not a stone is to be found to support this conjecture. It is certain that Naucratis belonged to the nome of Sais, but it may have been situated farther to the west than Desook—on what spot we cannot exactly know, and we are not able to support any hypothesis by evidence.

Away then, still farther north! We must hasten onwards if we would visit Resheed, or Rosetta, and still reach Tantah in time for the opening ceremonies of the great festival on Friday.

A favouring breeze swells our sails; we have the pretty little town of Fooa on our right. Foom el Mahmoudeeyeh lies to the left. There it is that huge and well-managed steam-engines work the pumps that force the waters of the Nile into the canal which connects the river with Alexandria. First one and then another village, each crowned with its minaret, comes into view and

DOOR OF AN ARABIAN HOUSE.

[1] The story of her sandal seems to be the origin of the tale of Cinderella.

ZENAB.

disappears; the richest cultivation is everywhere apparent. Before nightfall we have passed the palm-groves and hill of Aboo Mandoor, and the harbour of Resheed comes in sight, crowded with Arab barques. We find a hospitable reception in the house of an American, who is now commander-general of the fortifications, and who in his own country won a name for himself during the Civil War. The well-informed son of this veteran hero is our guide next day through the streets and bazaars, the mosques and gardens of the city.

Many Greek columns and pillars—used in building private houses and mosques, or lying on the ground under the open sky—are relics of the ancient Greek Bolbitine period, but there are no monuments or inscriptions of any earlier date; while, on the other hand, many handsome houses, ornamented with projecting storeys, and almost European in style, testify to the importance of the city in more recent times. A large part of the commerce of Alexandria, particularly in the products of Egyptian soil, was at one time diverted to Resheed, but it was forced to surrender it again as soon as the Mahmoudeeyeh Canal had once more opened the road from Alexandria to the Nile. Wherever we go we feel that the city is all too spacious for its 20,000 inhabitants; it is like a deserted palace, where humble citizens dwell in the halls and saloons. The gardens are inviting and neat. Resheed in Coptic is called Ti Rashit, which may be translated the "city of pleasantness." If we pass through the northern gate, and walk on, we come upon some fortifications, and among them Fort St. Julien. It was here that a French captain of engineers, named Bouchard, was employed in throwing up entrenchments, when his workmen discovered a stone, which made his name immortal and gave new fame to that of Rosetta.[1]

SELLER OF DATE BREAD.

Who has not heard of the "Rosetta Stone," the tablet or key which has upon it the three famous inscriptions which made it possible for European investigators to unlock the lips of the Egyptian Sphinx, closed as they had been for ages—that is to say, to decipher the hieroglyphic writings of the ancient Egyptians? By the fortune of war the inestimably precious block of basalt fell into the hands of the English, who have worthily enshrined it in the British Museum. We must defer telling the reader how it was possible, by the aid of the Egyptian inscription with its Greek translation incised on this slab, to decipher other hieroglyphic records until we stand before other monuments, which are preserved at Boolak, near Cairo, and which tested and proved the hypotheses of Egyptologists.[2]

[1] A.D. 1799.

[2] It is a decree of the priests of Egypt assembled (B.C. 198) at a synod at Memphis in honour of Ptolemy V., to whom it accords certain honours in consideration of the services rendered to the priesthood by the monarch. It consists of three versions: hieroglyphical, demotic or enchorial—used as a kind of written handwriting at the time, and employing the popular language, which differed from the extinct hieroglyphic—and Greek. About one-third of the hieroglyphical writing is wanting. Some decipherment was first attempted in 1802. Young, in 1818, deciphered the names of Ptolemy and Berenice

This famous tablet has lost a corner; how happy would he be that might find it!

But we have lingered too long on our voyage northwards. By dawn next day we are once more on board, and sailing back to Desook by the way by which we came. There we take the train, and reach our destination in time for the opening of the festival.

Tantah is an Egyptian city of moderate size, and the residence of the Mudeer of a considerable province. Opposite the railway station there stands a row of handsome houses, half-European in style; the viceregal barrack-like castle is as hideous as it is huge, and the white dust of the broad roadways is scorching under the mid-day sun. We will take one of the narrow, cool, and shady streets which lead to the heart of the city, and which in the true Arab fashion shows only bare walls on the side facing the street. Here and there a sort of oriel, or turret, closely latticed, projects from the grey wall, or the well-wrought masonry of a gate or archway pleases the eye. But all this we shall meet with again in Cairo, and infinitely more beautiful.

We will enter the chief bazaar, the great Sook of the city; it is difficult to make our way through the crowd of men that are constantly streaming through it, and still more difficult to fight for and keep a place by the small, closely-packed stalls of the merchants; but there is nothing to be procured here that cannot be found in far greater choice in the city of the Pyramids.[1]

We must simply allow ourselves to be carried onwards by the dense stream of people, and presently we find ourselves standing in front of the tall and well-kept new mosque. Its debased type of architecture affords small pleasure to the eye, which turns with more satisfaction to the medreseh, or school-house belonging to the mosque, which is an elegant structure of a more ancient date.

Opposite to it glitter the bright panes and gaudy bottles of the apothecary's shop, an indispensable institution in a town which has, too, a large hospital of its own. The apothecary himself we find to be a well-informed German, who has been a great traveller, and has done worthy service in his own country in natural history. From his shop—which for brilliant neatness and cleanliness might serve as a pattern for many an one in Europe—we can gaze comfortably at the motley files of men as they crowd into the mosque, and next day, Friday morning, may look on at the solemn procession which opens the festival. The destination of this procession is the tomb of the Mohammedan saint, Seyyid el Bedawee.

No resort of pilgrims in all Egypt is more attractive than this. Festivals are held there three times a year. In January, and again at the spring and autumn equinoxes, thousands of people assemble at Tantah, and at the time of the great Molid, or birthday festival of the saint, the pilgrims often number half a million.

It is not wholly in the interest of religion, it is true, that these masses converge on Tantah, but with very secular purpose as well. Supply and demand are active at the festival, and Moslems are allowed to trade even on the pilgrimage to Mecca.

in hieroglyphics, and his discovery of the phonetic principle—namely, that the hieroglyphs were used for sounds—led to the discovery of the whole by Champollion in 1822.

[1] Cairo.

MARKET AT TANTAH.

Many horses and camels, as well as horned cattle, sheep, and goats are driven hither for sale; the trade in all the produce of the soil must be very considerable, and booths are erected in the city, where, as in our annual fairs, goods of every description are offered to the buyer. Often the handicraftsman may be seen hard at work behind his counter. This is to show that all his wares are to be sold at first hand, and that the maker himself is responsible for the excellence of his own workmanship. The cooks' shops are closely surrounded, but the humbler customers treat themselves only to a cake of date-bread; this consists of dates with the kernels removed and then pressed together, and it is even more attractive to the flies than to the customers; the seller has to wage incessant war against them.

As the sparrow-hawks follow birds of passage so do thieves follow at the heels of those who come to the festival, and no one who has a friend to advise him goes out on the broad square, where the horse market is held, without having been warned against them.

Here every form of amusement known to the Oriental is offered to the pilgrim. But the delights of the Molid are by no means confined to this spot; on the contrary, every coffee-house in the city is brilliantly illuminated, and we can hear from afar the shrill Arab music, the clatter of castanets, and the shouts of "Ya salâm" (bravo) of the audience within. All the painted and overdressed votaries of Venus, all the singers and dancers of the Nile valley have met together there. At Tantah we met and recognised a Ghaziyeh, or dancer, whom we had admired before this in the house of the German consular agent at Luxor, in remote Upper Egypt. The famous Almehs[1] or singers of Cairo, however, keep away from the annual gathering at Tantah; but among those who come to it we see women of rare and peculiar beauty. They constitute a distinct race, distinguished from the Egyptians proper by many peculiarities, and particularly by the shape of the face, and they have among themselves lady-presidents, one of whom we heard called—perhaps in jest only—"Makhbooba-Bey."[2] We shall meet with them again in Upper Egypt, and have an opportunity of studying their costume, their rich jewels, and their treatment of their art when free from these crowded and noisy surroundings. Wherever we turn our eyes during the festival at Tantah we see these women, and with them male dancers, dressed as women, besides jugglers and conjurers of every degree, who usually ply their art best in the open air, in the midst of a circle of spectators squatting on the ground. The *naïveté* and good-humour of the Oriental is very conspicuous under these circumstances.

It is a thing to see how kindly the elders make way for the children, and seat them in the front rows; how the tall make way for the short, and the men for the women, that they all may see; what horror is expressed by every face when the juggler lifts his dagger, and how reverently the whole circle bow if Jack Pudding names Allah, the Most High! Never have we heard heartier laughter than from the auditors of the unmentionable jokes of Karagyooz and Ali Kaka;

[1] The Almehs appear at the earliest Pharaonic times, and particularly flourished under the XVIIIth and XIXth dynasties, B.C. 1500—1200. They danced naked with a girdle only round the loins, and appeared at entertainments. Some are represented on the paintings of tombs in the British Museum.

[2] Literally, "my Lord Mistress."

but, it must be confessed, we were never more sincerely grieved by seeing women and children among an audience.

A little-known poet named Freudenberg has described the scene of turmoil at this festival better than we can do in dry prose. The gifted but restless Wilibald Winkler, who spent a long time in Egypt, includes him among the "whimsical dreamers" of whom he counts himself one, and says he was "a little old gentleman hardly four feet high." But he was certainly a poet who wrote the verses of which the following is a modest translation. The English language, however, does not lend itself to any worthy rendering of the brilliant, sportive jingle of the German syllables with the happy intermixture of Arabic words:—

Loud is the sound of ballad-singers shouting
While, with her wanton grace and paces pretty,
  Like some alluring, sly coquette
  A dancer with her castagnette
Displays herself in subtle pantomime;
And singers chant an old Arabian ditty
  Of Saladin and of his time.

Seesaws are creaking, all their bells are tinkling,
Gaudily-painted vans and coaches clatter;
  The Berberee[1] guitars are humming,
  The Darabookkahs[2] round us drumming;
A thousand people push and shove and hustle,
A thousand voices buzz and roar and chatter,
  The fair is at the height of bustle.

Lounging at leisure through this giddy rabble—
This rout—this Oriental Paradise—
  A man, with hands behind his back,
  Rich—passing rich—though gold he lack—
A little man comes quietly to ponder,
With gentle smiles and kindly thoughtful eyes,
  Upon the happy turmoil yonder.

Before a cook's stall presently he pauses;
Zemith and Baklawah and dainty cakes
  And Kuslokum and almond tarts
  And Shekerlee[3] of many sorts,
Bardoo sherbet[4] and syrups violet-scented
Tempt him—alas! his empty purse he shakes;
  He feasts his eyes—and is contented.

He stops to watch the swings rocking and swaying;
The youngsters laugh as they are tossed and whirled:
  It must be nice to ride up there
  In rhythm to that gay Nubian air!
To rush through space and feel the breezes blow,
To mount and soar and float above the world!
  But—*para yok*[5]—he stays below.

He joins the circle crowded round a wizard
Who wakes the dead and conjures up the devil,
  Who blows a horn—and at the sound
  His empty jug at once is found
Full—filled by Afreets;[6] nuts to serpents turn
Within their pockets—puzzled still they revel;
  Abundant bakhsheesh he can earn.

A short way on he finds the Alateeyeh[7]—
There sound the feeble, fiddling Hemengheh,[8]
  The dulcimer and tambourine,
  Zither and songs of Bedaween;
The weird old airs cradle and soothe his care
With sweet fantastic dreams, half sad, half gay;
  A mystic language charms his ear.

There, 'mid the tents where garish lamps are flaring
Dervishes spin in wild delirious dances,
  Ecstatically drunk as it were.
  Coffee, sherbet, and pipes[9] out there
Mingle their scent with musk and ambergris;
Fumes of Hasheesh inspire voluptuous fancies—
  Oh! for a sou to purchase bliss!

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[1] A mandoline.

[2] A drum chiefly used in harems. It is of wood, often inlaid with tortoise-shell and mother-of-pearl, and shaped like a bottle. The skin is stretched over the broad side; the neck is open.

[3] Favourite sweetmeats among the Orientals, and especially the Egyptians.

[4] There are various kinds of sherbet; a favourite variety is a syrupy *eau sucrée* flavoured with crushed violets.

[5] *Para yok*—not a sou.

[6] The Arab bogey or kobold.

[7] Dancers and singers, often wearing women's apparel.

[8] A kind of violin with a very small body of pierced cocoa-nut. The bridge rests on a piece of the skin of a fish, which is stretched over the cavity of the nut like a drum-skin.

[9] Sheesheh. Persian glass. These pipes have a glass bowl and a long flexible tube.

His humour merry and his mind diverted,
He glides about among the scenes that please him;
The little man can see and hear.
His heart is soon beguiled of care,
In age still fresh and young, and will not listen
To petty cares like gnats that buzz and tease him:
In rosy hues the pictures glisten.

Satiate at last, and silent, homewards turning
As from a feast of gods away he went.
Quoth he:—"Have I not had my share?
I poor!—there is no better fare
Than mirth with liberty—to those who know it."
Who was this wight, contented with content?
A little fond old man—a poet.

It is clear that a pilgrimage to Tantah is not merely an affair of religion; but no doubt there are many among the pilgrims who are full of sincere devotion, and have but one aim in view, namely, to pray by the coffin of the great saint Seyyid Ahmed el Bedawee. The history of this miracle-worker is highly characteristic, and shall be given here; for it is well calculated to show to what sort of men Islam attributes the style and title of sanctity.

He is said to have been born about A.D. 1200 at Fez, whither his family, who were of course direct descendants of the Prophet, had fled from Irâk. In his seventh year he accompanied them on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and there he spent a stormy youth, showing more taste and aptitude for wild pranks than for serious study, so that he earned the title of "scatter-brains" among his companions. When he was eight-and-twenty his father died, and soon after he experienced an extraordinary change. It was under his brother's roof—for he himself scorned to set up a house and family—that the afflatus of divine love, the *Walah* of the Moslem, came upon him, and converted the licentious and reckless youth into a saint. His hasty tongue seemed to be spell-bound, he expressed himself only by signs, he mortified his body by forty-day fasts, and would keep his eyes, that glowed like live coals, fixed heavenward all day long. At the same time he heard inward voices, and strange visions visited him at night; his fellow-citizens began to venerate him as a man favoured by Heaven, and the fame of his sanctity preceded him when, urged by a mystical longing, he made a journey on foot, first to Irâk and then to Egypt, where he was received with distinction by the reigning Sultan Beybars. He settled finally in Tantah, and performed unheard-of feats of mortification and asceticism. He would never put on a new garment until the old one had rotted upon him; his fixed contemplation of the heavens became more and more prolonged; and miracles of every kind, even to the resuscitation of the dead, were reported of him. He gave mysterious counsel and support to his followers in all their need, his contemners were persistently punished by suffering and death. He is said to have died at the venerable age of ninety-six; but the solemn festival of his Molid, or birthday, was not instituted until much later, and grew more and more popular, attracting a constantly increasing number of votaries. The exact description which we possess of his person is particularly attractive, because it represents him as a thorough Arab, and as a man whose characteristic peculiarities could not fail to exercise a powerful influence on others. Nothing was to be seen of his head, we are told, but two large, sunken black eyes and a prominent aquiline nose, with the contiguous portion of the cheeks and the lower portion of the forehead—of a light brown hue—and the general outline of a massive countenance. All else was concealed by two face-cloths, *Litám*, such as the Bedaween wear to the present day. From the period when he began his ascetic exercises he

never removed these cloths, and his disciple Abd'el Medjeed, when at his earnest entreaty he lifted only the upper wrapper, is said to have been so impressed and overcome by that sacred countenance that he shortly afterwards gave up the ghost. Many scars, graced his countenance, and on each side of his nose he had a mole, which is considered a sign of great beauty by the Orientals. This remarkable head crowned a tall and slender form; his arms were long—the unfailing mark of a true Arab—and his legs strong.

As the festival of Tantah is wont to give rise to many frays and commotions, the Government at Cairo has frequently decreed that it should cease to be held; but no Mufti has ever dared to carry this edict into effect, for religious prejudice clings too tenaciously to the saint who was so ready to aid the faithful, and whose vengeance fell so heavily on those who attacked his honour. Even at the present day he is believed to work abundance of miracles, and to exercise a decisive influence even in trivial family affairs—nay, especially in these, for the Arabs attribute the function of direct intercession with the Almighty to the Prophet alone, and not to their saints, who, on the contrary, are permitted only to draw, as it were, on the store of miraculous power bestowed upon him, and to distribute favours in greater or less measure to the votaries who visit their tombs.

How sacred is the mausoleum where, behind a finely-wrought bronze railing, his sarcophagus, covered with red velvet, stands on one side and that of his son Farag on the other! The most fervent devotion is expressed in the faces of the pious devotees who pray here, and they quit the mausoleum filled with hope and contentment; for not only does the great Ahmed hear their prayers, but Kutb also, the miraculous being who rules over the Walees, or saints, and who is especially present here. Excepting the dome of the Kaaba at Mecca, there are few spots where the devotee is more fain to linger than by the mausoleum of the holy Seyyid Ahmed el Bedawee at Tantah.

We may omit any closer inspection of this modern mosque itself. The splendid mosques of Cairo, of a better period, will be of much greater interest; but in none of those have I ever seen so many or such zealous worshippers as here on one occasion, when, for the first and last time in the course of my many visits to the Nile valley, the fanaticism of the Moslems turned upon me with such fury that nothing but my own deliberate coolness and the intervention of the Sheikh of the Mosque saved me from serious injury.

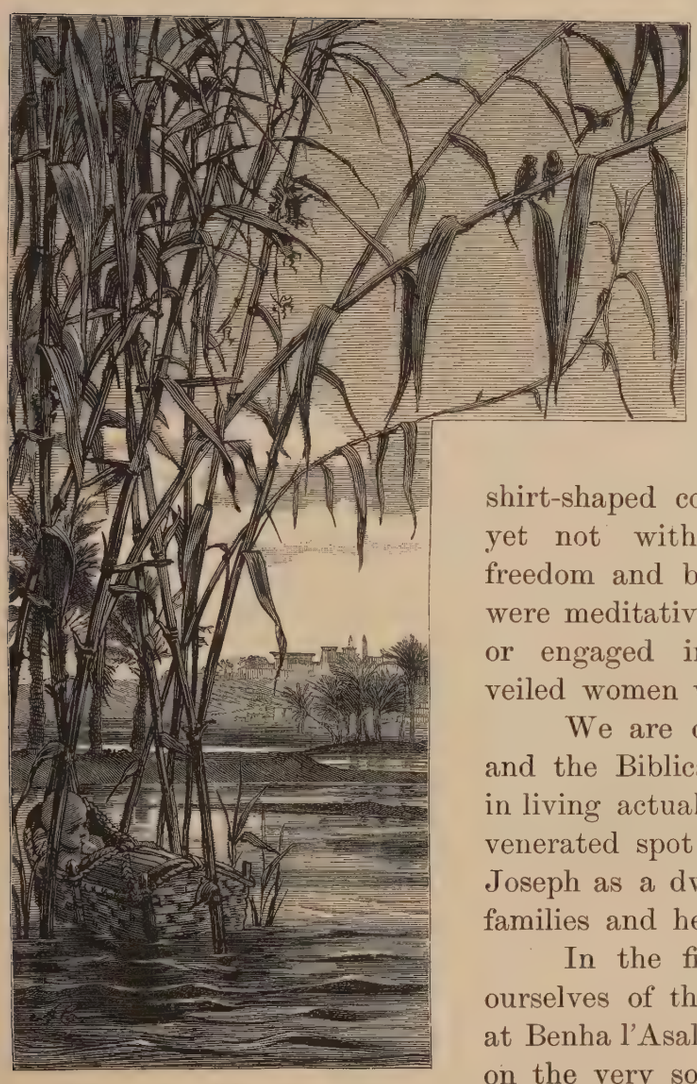
The festival at Tantah resembles in many respects the feast solemnly held at Bubastis, and described by Herodotus;[1] and it may perhaps be regarded as its outcome and successor.

Before we quit this sacred spot to wend our way across the eastern Delta—known to us by name from early infancy as the land of Goshen—we will visit the tents outside the city, where thousands of pilgrims are encamped, and where, on the shores of the canal that waters Tantah, we may witness many scenes that remind us of the encampments of the tribes of Jacob, whose fertile territory we are now about to traverse.

[1] Lib. II. c. 59, celebrated, according to the tablet of Canopus, on the first of the Egyptian month Payni and four following days, in the ninth year of Ptolemy Euergetes I., B.C. 238.

FATIMA.

GOSHEN.



WHO ever saw the great meeting-place of the ten thousand pilgrims outside the gate of Tantah without being reminded of the camp of the wandering Israelites? The most beautiful illustrations of the Bible narrative were before my eyes, tangible and in the flesh, as I gazed at the groups of figures — bearded men, with sharply-cut features and glittering black eyes; wearing turbans, but clothed otherwise in the simple shirt-shaped coat of Eastern nations; barefoot, and yet not without dignity and distinction in the freedom and breadth of their motions. Here they were meditatively resting, there tending their cattle, or engaged in vehement discussion; there again veiled women were helping their camels to water.

We are on the borders of the land of Goshen, and the Biblical pictures which here offer themselves in living actuality to our sight prompt us to visit the venerated spot which Pharaoh assigned to his steward Joseph as a dwelling-place for his brethren and their families and herds.

In the first instance, we can once more avail ourselves of the railway. We change carriages first at Benha l'Asal, and again at Zakazeek. We are now on the very soil of Goshen proper, the eastern province of the Delta. As far as it is possible to fix its ancient limitations, it exhibits the form of a cornucopia, bounded towards the east, at the widest end or opening of the cornucopia, by the water-way that divides

Africa from Asia. The fresh-water canal which already existed at the time of the sojourn of the Jews in Egypt, and which was reopened by M. de Lesseps, washes its southern frontier; the Lake of Menzaleh lies to the north of it, and to the west the Tanitic arm of the Nile, which has now dwindled to a narrow water-course.

Many and great as are the changes that the centuries have wrought in Goshen, they have not been able to efface the characteristic peculiarities of the landscape. Wherever the Nile-flood reaches the fields, even on the shores of the fresh-water canal, the fertilised soil yields a rich harvest to the husbandman; but on the higher levels, and towards the east generally, spread wide parched flats, on which only a variety of desert weeds can find sustenance, and where numerous nomad tribes pitch their tents and pasture their cattle. It is towards the north, in the vicinity of the lake of Menzaleh, that the nature of the land seems to have undergone the most conspicuous change. Where formerly the Semitic herdsman could pasture innumerable cattle on the rich marshy land lie pools of bitter, brackish water; and where a peaceful community laboured and accumulated wealth in handsome towns a few poor fishermen now dry their nets in front of their miserable huts.

TENT OF BEDAWEEN ARABS.

We now invite you, Reader, to accompany us in an excursion to the lakes, through the pasture-land and desert of the province of Goshen.

A VEILED BEAUTY.

We will start from Zakazeek, the ancient Bubastis. There is a great deal worth seeing in the station of this flourishing town, which is the central dépôt for the vast trade in cotton from the eastern province, and the chief functionaries of that part of Egypt also reside here. The waiting-rooms have the same look of western neatness as the counting-houses of the European merchants in the city itself; but many a traveller has been tempted to neglect the excellent breakfast that was served him, watching the strange and motley groups of travellers that gather on the platform. Particularly there are pilgrims to Mecca from every part of the East, and they crowd the ticket-office and the platform, especially during the weeks preceding the month of pilgrimage, attracting the attention of the traveller from the West. Every Mussulman ought to accomplish a pilgrimage to the Holy Places at least once in his lifetime, and the fulfilment of this injunction is now-a-days very essentially facilitated by railways and steamboats. Moslems from the three quarters of the earth meet here. The most stately-looking are the tall Kabyles from Algeria, and the Moors of Tunis in their white

burnous; the most comfortable seem to be the Tartars, who carry their samovar, or Russian tea-urn, with them, and never cast off their high over-shoes and fur caps, even on the parched sand of the desert and under the African sun. Yonder

TUNISIAN PILGRIM.

you may see three wives of a Turk, squatting on the ground in charge of an old nurse or duenna; their lord and master jealously paces up and down in front of his little harem, and casts an evil glance on you; he is suspicious lest your eyes may meet those of his youngest wife, for the light Turkish veil leaves the eyes uncovered. A pretty and elegant European lady gazes inquisitively at her less independent sisters; and what would they say if they could know that this young

and unveiled girl has travelled all the way from the distant land of the Nemsâwee (Germans) quite unaccompanied, and is going, relying only on herself, as far as India, to bring up boys in the knowledge of many sciences?

There is a perpetual stir and bustle in the station at Zakazeek; but there was a time when this place was not a mere resting-place for passers-by, but was

BLACK GRANITE STATUE OF SEKHET.

MUMMY OF A CAT.

itself the goal of many travellers, and attracted more pilgrims than any city in Egypt.

Out yonder, within a few minutes' walk of the station, rises a tall and narrow heap of ruins on the site of the ancient Bubastis. The populous city has disappeared from the face of the earth, and the words of the prophet Ezekiel have been fulfilled there—her young men were to perish by the sword, and her women to be led away into captivity.[1] The city must have been destroyed by fire, as we

[1] Ezekiel xxx. 17. Pi-beseth is Bubastis.

learn from fragments of melted glass and blackened stones, and with it the temple which stood in its midst—that famous temple of which Herodotus says that there were many larger and more splendid, but not one that he had seen that would compare with it in beauty of proportion.

The Arabs call the ruins of Bubastis *Tel Basta*. Here, about seven years since, I found the fragments of two statues of the cat-headed goddess who was worshipped here, sometimes under the name of Bast, sometimes as Sekhet.[1] She was the goddess of love and passion; the daughter of the Sun-god, who with her fiery teeth warred against all her father's enemies, and who in the nether world punished the guilty. But she was also Aphrodite, and with a sceptre of flowers in her hand presided over the joys of love and the pleasures of feasting and intoxication. She is represented sometimes with the head of the furious lion, and sometimes with that of the caressing cat, corresponding to her two natures. Vast crowds of men —Herodotus reckons them at 700,000—collected to keep her festivals. Men and women alike found place in the flat boats that conveyed them, and the latter outdid the men in audacity. Singing, flute-playing, clatter, and the clapping of hands never ceased throughout the voyage. The stay-at-home folks in the towns by which they passed were greeted with coarse jests, and in Bubastis itself vast offerings of beasts were sacrificed, and more wine was drunk than elsewhere in the whole course of the year.

THE FATHER OF THE CATS, WITH THE CARAVAN OF PILGRIMS.

[1] Her name is generally Sekhet. She was the wife of Ptah or Vulcan, and as such called Merienptah, "beloved of Ptah." Their son was Nefer Tum. Other names she also bore, as Urheq, and Menhi or Menhit. Statues of her were made by Amenophis III. about B.C. 1400, of dark granite. Mystically she was male and female.

[2] Her cat-headed type is much later, and appears about our era in bronze figures.

The historian to whom we owe the description of this festival tells us that dead cats were embalmed and then sent to be buried at Bubastis. No trace remains of the tombs of the cats; but, on the other hand, the memory of the ancient sanctity of this animal has not altogether died out. It is not very long since, in Cairo, a considerable sum was bequeathed by will for the maintenance of starving cats. Until within a few decades each caravan of pilgrims to Mecca was accompanied by an old woman who carried with her a number of cats, and was known as "the mother of the cats;" and to this day a man with cats travels with each caravan. This singular custom is probably a relic or memorial of the cats which used to be brought to Bubastis.

COTTON PLANT.

It can hardly be a mere coincidence that makes 700,000 the number of the Egyptians that had to make the pilgrimage to Bubastis, while 70,000 Moslems must every year visit Mecca. If any are wanting to make up the number of believers Heaven supplies the deficiency by sending angels.

Under the lion-headed form the monuments sometimes mention this goddess as Astarte,[1] and say that the people of Asia were under her special protection. There can be no doubt that there were many men of Semitic race among the citizens of Bubastis. The whole eastern portion of the Delta was peopled by them, and there were few places in it that, at the time of the Pharaohs, had not a Semitic as well as an Egyptian name.

The capital city, from which the province assigned to Joseph's tribe took its name of Gosen (Goshen), bore the name of Pa or Pha-*Kos* (Phacousa). The Hebrews called it and the province *Goshen,* and to this day there are mounds of ruins near the Arab village of Fakoos, among which I myself found the name of Pharaoh the Oppressor.

Fakoos may now be reached by railway. Formerly I visited it on horseback, and rode all about its pasture-land and the desert-strip of the Delta. I found hospitable entertainment in the houses of the Egyptian officials, of the Greek cotton-merchants, and of the well-to-do village magistrates; and I shall never forget the night I spent in the neighbourhood of Fakoos, at the house of a young Englishman who had erected a steam-engine for working machines to pick and clean cotton in the factory of a certain Bey, and who was now employed in working and repairing it. My kind host had been for two years the manager of his Turkish master's plantation and factory, and his charming young wife had joined him in

[1] At Edfoo, lion-headed, wearing a solar disk.

A RIDE THROUGH THE DESERT.

Egypt. Both had given up present comfort and pleasure to lay the foundation of an independent existence at home in the future. A fixed sum—stated in figures—was the goal that they looked forward to, and as soon as the sum should be made up both were ready to leave the luxuriant country that lay around them as far as the eye could reach—but not before. To attain this end both husband and wife submitted to every privation: not even the smallest ornament decorated their meagrely-furnished rooms, not a drop of wine had ever sparkled in the few glasses they owned; the temptations of an expedition to Cairo or to Alexandria were steadily resisted, and nothing bound them to the world but an English newspaper and a little heap of letters, read almost to pieces, and lying on the work-table of the gentle creature whom the Arab women of the village avoided as an outcast, because she showed her pretty face unveiled among the men. "For two years," she said, "I have not spoken a word to any European woman, and I cannot understand the Arab women; and besides they scorn me."

EGYPTIAN WHEAT. (*Triticum Sativum.*)

I had a few bottles of red wine and much news for them of the outer world, and so it fell out that we three spent half the night in chat, and that they parted from me as from a brother when my tall bay horse was brought round, and I mounted for my ride to San—the ancient Zoan—the city where Moses performed his miracles before Pharaoh.

The first part of the way led me across a well-tilled pasture and corn land, intersected by canals, and differing but little from the country I had passed through on the way from Rosetta. I found a few peasants' houses, with orchards in full bloom and many an European tree and shrub interspersed among the palms, and the Egyptian wheat with its heavy ears reminded me of home. At last I came to an end of the fields and was on the dry soil of the desert, that showed patches here and there of a salt incrustation looking like a film of ice. Ere long the desert spread round me on every side, and it was here that for the first time I felt the magical charm of its solitude, and, with it, that mysterious excitement which takes possession of the traveller's fancy and exhibits its results so conspicuously in the vivid imaginativeness of the Arabs themselves, who people the lifeless waste with a legion of marvellous and fantastic beings. Here dwells the whole world of spirits; here riot the Djins and the Ghouls that rush through the air riding on weird beasts, on locusts, lizards, and spiders. And even the devout may believe in them, for the Prophet himself respected them, and many confessed Islam; but others are evil spirits and oppress men, and the devil is their ruler. The Djins dare even mount up to Heaven to spy its secrets, but the angels keep watch, and the falling stars that

the wanderer in the desert sees at night are fiery arrows which fall upon these audacious spirits.

As you wander through the silent waste at the hours of prayer a clear long-drawn cry may greet your ear. Your eye can see no living thing, but the voice grows more and more distinct. A secret shudder runs through your veins, you spring up a slope which conceals the horizon, and now you perceive a lonely herdsman, surrounded by his sheep, who shouts out his prayer as loud as ever he can

HERDSMAN IN THE DESERT.

to empty space. This is in order that the spirits may hear the solitary shepherd and be witness for him at the day of judgment. Is there on earth a more ghostly apparition than an Arab traveller mounted high on his camel, wrapped in light-coloured garments, and escorted by vultures who follow him on his silent way in the twilight along the sandy track? When the moon is up and its beams are reflected in the micaceous fragments on the ridges, the ghouls are transformed into dancing lights, and the Djins appear in human form, floating above the ground or pacing silently along, or riding on black horses with their faces black too, and claws like the coulter of a sickle.

These are the terrors of the desert, which is nevertheless full of an indescribable charm which I hope to communicate to the reader in another place. This present ride through the desert is too short.

Nor was it wholly deserted, for I came upon three different encampments of Bedaween with a few camels and small herds of lean kine. By sunrise I had reached

RUINS OF TANIS.

JOSEPH AND PHARAOH.

the strip of fertile land that borders the old Tanitic arm of the Nile. This stream in the time of the Pharaohs watered the most important part of Goshen far more liberally than it does at present; it is now called the Mu'izz, or the Canal of San-el-Hager. On the farther side of this stream stands the fishing hamlet of San. We called out, but no one appeared to ferry us over; then a fisherman, who had joined company with me from a neighbouring village, offered himself to carry me across the shallow river. In an instant he had thrown off his fellah's shirt and, stooping before me, invited me to mount on his broad back. I hesitated a moment with an uncanny feeling of astonishment, for it was as if one of the Hykshos sphinxes of San —to which I will shortly introduce the reader—had come to life, and invited me to mount. Through how many generations have these knotty vertebræ, these thick lips, and these sturdy muscular limbs, which are so different from the graceful and slender native Egyptian type, been transmitted? And not I alone, but the celebrated archæologist, Mariette Pacha, met with hundreds of men of the same stamp when, by command of the Khedive, he cleared so many of the monuments of Egypt from the sand, and among them those of Tanis, restoring them to the light of day and the scientific study of antiquarians.

I need not relate how the broad-shouldered descendant of the Hykshos carried me through the water, how my servant followed him, and the horse-boy, with the saddle on his head, leading the horse by the bridle; how I reached the opposite shore, half dry, half dripping, and soon after sundown found shelter under the hospitable roof of the worthy Ahmed Bakhsheesh. The pottage or soup, the fowl stuffed with rice and raisins, and the baked fish which were set before me were as much relished by the hungry traveller as the contents of my last bottle of wine were by the finely-grown son of the house, who, to gratify his guest, sacrificed some of the joys of Paradise, and sinned against the prohibition of the Prophet ever to drink wine. I would rather say nothing about that night's sleep, for I lay on a carpet spread on the floor. Only a few feet from me slept my servant and horse-boy, not to speak of a number of fisher-lads—and I had forgotten my insect powder!

I hailed the dawn as a release, took a bath in the icy-cold arm of the Nile, and then followed my host's son to the ruins of Tanis.

In a few minutes I was standing in their midst. Many of the remains of the cities and temples that have come down to us from the period of Egypt's splendour are of greater extent and in better preservation, but no ruins excel these in picturesque charm. I wandered from monument to monument, seeking a vantage-ground from which to overlook them all, and before beginning to investigate and copy the separate inscriptions I ascended a mound of rubbish to the north of the ruins, and sat down by the dilapidated tomb of some Sheikh. From this spot, whither I often returned, it was possible to overlook the whole extent of the ruins.[1] The city must have been a large one, and one of the most splendid residences and centres of culture in the kingdom. Only in Thebes are there so many and such large

[1] The most interesting are of the period of the Hykshos, or Shepherds, of the XVIIth dynasty. Traces of the XIIIth dynasty have been found there. Although the capital or seat of government was removed thence under the XXVIth dynasty, it was not entirely abandoned, for monuments of the period of the Ptolemies have been found there. It fell under the edict of Theodosius, A.D. 381.

monuments of hard granite to be found; but of all the magnificent buildings which once stood here not even the ground-plan can be recognised. The great sanctuary erected by Rameses (Ramses) II.—Pharaoh the Oppressor—has crumbled into dust. Granite pillars with palm-leaf capitals, colossi, and no less than twelve broken obelisks lie, by the side of less important monuments, in grand confusion on the earth. An Arabic legend relates that the Pharaohs were giants, who could move the mightiest

EXCAVATIONS AT TANIS.

masses of rock with a magic rod; but if it needed giants to erect these monuments, it must have required the will and the strength of a God thus to overthrow them.

It is impossible here to enumerate all the monuments separately; it must suffice to say that among them there are several of the greatest importance and interest.

Every period of Egyptian history, excepting the very oldest, here finds a representative; and when I, in perfect solitude, looked round on the brick foundations of the ruined houses that lay close to me on the slope of the hill, at the overthrown temples and palaces just below my feet, and farther off at the fields and pasture-land, splendid visions of those by-gone days rose before my inward eye; the glorious past of Tanis—how far removed from the melancholy actuality!—became to me a living presence.

It was at This, in Upper Egypt, the neighbour-city to Abydos, that the power of the race of the Pharaohs was developed. Its first offshoots founded Memphis, and ere long the culture of the Nile valley had spread from the first cataract to the coast of the Mediterranean. Here, at the time of the builders of the Pyramids, a stock of Semitic blood, derived from the East, acquired a firm foothold. Some of the new-comers pastured their flocks in marshes near the Lake of Menzaleh, while others navigated the sea—which the Egyptians hated and dreaded—in swiftly sailing vessels, and established trading ports on the mouth of the eastern branch of the Nile. At the early part of the third century before Christ the foreigners were beginning to crowd the Egyptian inhabitants, and even to overmatch them. Their princes—who resided at Heracleopolis, in the Sethroitic district, close to the eastern boundary and not far from Tanis—made themselves masters of the throne of the Pharaohs and of the Nile valley, until the descendants of the deposed Egyptian kings succeeded in overpowering and exterminating them. By the middle of the third millennium before Christ a dynasty of native race wielded the sceptre at Thebes over the whole of united Egypt, including the province of the foreigners; and the Amenemhas and Usertesens, whom we shall often meet with again, erected proud sanctuaries at Tanis to the Egyptian gods, and set up their images, carved out of hard stone, in front of their throne. They fortified the eastern frontier; but, secure in the sense of their own power, they allowed ingress to Semitic immigrants, who approached them submissively and with gifts. The glorious XIIth dynasty became extinct in a woman. A weaker race mounted the throne of the Pharaohs, and the migration of a Semitic stock on horse and on foot from Syria pressed southwards on the Egyptians, who, though they attempted to oppose the incursion of these barbarous tribes, were vanquished, and their kings were forced to retire to Upper Egypt. Meanwhile, the Asiatics settled in the Eastern Delta, added strong fortifications to Pelusium—which was also called Abaris[1]—and raised Tanis to be the capital of their princes; and ere long they mingled with their

HYKSHOS SPHINX.

[1] Called in Egyptian *Ha-uar*, and in Greek *Auaris*. The Egyptian appellation has been supposed to mean "the place of flight." Chabas, "Les Pasteurs en Egypte," p. 41.

fellow Semites, the earlier settlers in the Nile valley. It is an historical law that the conquerors of a highly cultivated and civilised country must inevitably adapt themselves to its manners and customs, and thus actually by their conquest be forced into subjection; and it proved true in this case. We know them by the name of *Hykshos,* that is to say, princes of the Shasu, or Bedaween, and we know, from the few monuments that remain to us of their work, that they assimilated themselves to Egyptian life in every particular, even in their works of art. Like the Pharaohs, they had sphinxes made as symbolical representations of themselves, with the bodies of lions and heads of men; and the faces of these figures were treated as portraits of their own features. The finest of these Hykshos sphinxes had already been transported to Cairo when I first visited Tanis, but a few still looked up at me out of the sand, and they exactly resembled the people I had to deal with at San and by the Lake of Menzaleh.

RAMSES II. (*From a Statue at Turin.*)

The Hykshos remained in power more than four hundred years.[1] The national hatred of the vanquished branded their memory, painted them as an accursed race of devastators, could hardly forgive them for setting up their god Ba'al in the place of the old gods, and bestowed on him the name of Seth,[2] or Typhon, which was that of the Egyptian divinity who was worshipped first as the god of war and of foreign lands, and was subsequently execrated as the impersonation of all that was gloomy and discordant in nature and in the life of man. Of Evil in the positive sense, as opposed to Good, the Egyptian religion had no knowledge. Their feeling as to evil was that it was but transitory, a passage to future

[1] The exact duration of the Shepherd rule is a difficult point. Two statements are given by Manetho—259 years two months, according to one version; and 511 years, according to another.

[2] The name of Set, or Seth, is found as early as the VIth dynasty.

salvation; as dying was merely the process of death, which was in fact the threshold of the true and everlasting life. The highest honours were paid to Seth in the cities of the Hykshos, and not only kings were called by his name, but also the territory known as the Sethroitic district, which lay adjoining the nome, or province, of Tanis, and to the east of it.

During the dominion of the Hykshos in the northern part of the Nile valley, the old Egyptian royal house ruled in Upper Egypt. A papyrus informs us that a dispute about a spring in the desert gave the Pharaohs an occasion for turning against the Asiatic interlopers. A great war of deliverance began, which lasted many decades, and ended by the taking of Abaris, Pelusium, after a siege both by land and sea.[1] We still find traces of the camp of the Hykshos at Tel el Heyr, and at Tanis the remains of their kings' palaces; while in the north-eastern portion of the Delta we meet with their living descendants, still bearing the features of their ancestry.

The victorious Egyptians forced the main body of the Hykshos army to retire. Part of the vanquished withdrew by land to Asia; others, taking to the sea, colonised the islands of the Carpathian Sea, an ancient name for a part of the Mediterranean near Crete; and a third division, who had devoted themselves to peaceful occupations, remained behind in the Delta.

The strength of the Egyptians had gained in temper during the long war against the intrusive foreigners. The enterprising spirit of the kings of the XVIIIth dynasty, who resided at Thebes, helped them to penetrate Asia as far as the Euphrates, and to fill the treasuries of the city of Amon with the spoils of the East. The Hebrews, to whom a grateful Pharaoh had abandoned the rich pastures of Goshen, herded their flocks unmolested. Every one knows the story of Joseph, the king's steward, and the Biblical narrative of the multiplying and increase of Jacob's race to a nation. Here we are standing on the very scene of the events which preceded the Exodus of the Israelites.

Rameses I. overthrew the last descendants of the conquerors of the Hykshos, who had wasted their strength in religious struggles, and usurped their throne. His son was Seti I., and his grandson, Rameses II., is the Sesostris of the Greeks and the "Pharaoh the Oppressor" of the Israelites; his great-grandson Menephtah is the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Many bas-reliefs and portrait-statues make us familiar with the physiognomy of most of the members of this family, whose peculiar features confirm the idea—which is supported by many other reasons—that they were of Semitic origin. The military glory of Sesostris has been immortalised by the narratives of classical writers, but all that he and his father achieved as patrons of architecture is less well known. We shall have occasion at Thebes to marvel at their stupendous creations, and we learn from an inscription in the temple at Karnak that Seti I. had planned a canal to connect the Nile with the Red Sea, and at the same time to water the plains of Southern Goshen. The ruins of a city, built by Rameses, have been discovered near its ancient bed; and on the same spot, Mashoota, we saw, besides a monument of granite, strong walls composed of

[1] The war began under Aahmes I., or Amosis.

THE FINDING OF MOSES.

bricks which were stamped with the name of the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Similar bricks are found at Tanis, which the monuments also call the city of Rameses, and which is the Raamses of the Bible. Here and at Pithom it is said in the Scripture that "the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in morter, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field" (Exodus i. 13, 14). In Exodus v. 7 we find that the taskmasters and their officers were commanded, "Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves."

Can there be any better illustration of this speech than the brick mixed with straw brought from Goshen and preserved in the Berlin museum, and of which we give a drawing? It bears the name of Rameses, who frequently resided at Tanis, started thence on his warlike expeditions, and brought one of his greatest wars to a happy termination by signing a treaty there with his chief antagonists, the princes of the Kheta.

He was wont to turn his arms against Semitic nations; what wonder then that he severely oppressed the kindred race who were subject to him, and strove to burden them with hard labour? Venerable papyrus-rolls contain the accounts of the taskmasters of the Hebrews as rendered to the overseers, and show us how unremittingly the officers watched the labourers, and endeavoured to promote their material comfort. The officials praise the neighbourhood of Tanis and the fertility of Goshen in words of rapture. Paintings in the tombs at Thebes show us the labourers at their work; but the people whom we here see—drawing water, hewing up the earth, kneading the clay, filling it into wooden moulds, and piling the bricks in layers while the taskmaster watches them, stick in hand—are not Jews, but Asiatics of some other race who had been carried captive into Egypt at an earlier date under Thothmes III., and there forced, as the inscription tells us, "to make bricks for the new buildings of the provision houses, or granaries, of the city of Amon." By the side of the second picture it is written, "Prisoners, brought by his Majesty to labour at the temple of his father Amon." A third inscription celebrates the vigilance of the taskmasters, and the gods are entreated to reward the king for remembering them with wine and good food. An overseer calls out to the people, "I carry the stick, be ye not idle."

It is impossible to study these pictures without thinking of the oppression of the Jews. Perhaps the very wall on which I sat so many hours was the work of their hands. Perhaps it was on the very stream that I crossed yesterday that the heart-sick mother of Moses floated the rush basket containing her child; and it is expressly testified by the Psalmist (Psalm lxxviii. 12, 43) that the Pharaoh before whom Moses wrought his miracles lived at Tanis. It was hence that the cry went out for the flight of the enslaved multitude, and hence that Menephtah set forth with his chariots and horses to overtake the fugitives. We are able to present the reader with a portrait of the vacillating king, who in his terror gave the promise which he retracted as soon as he thought himself secure. Another portrait of the same prince, with even a weaker countenance, is preserved in the museum at Boolak. All the general human interest in Tanis ends with the Hebrew exodus; but the

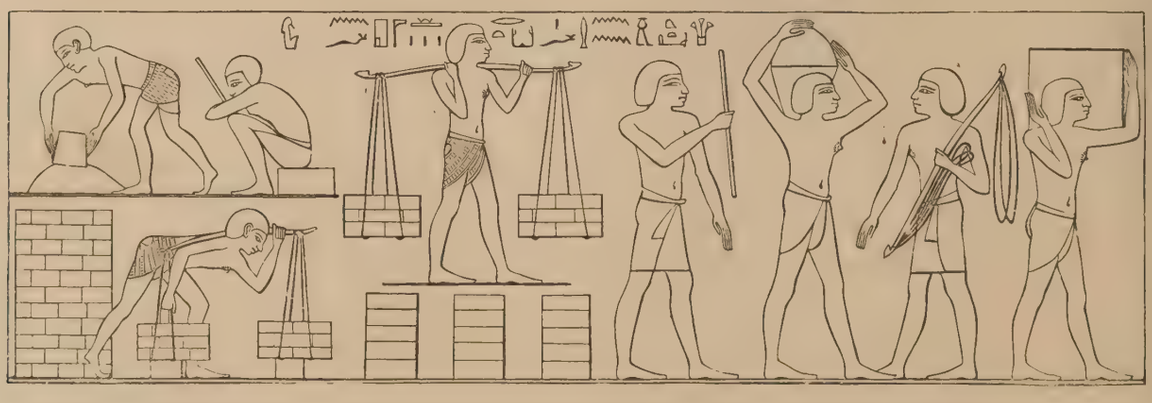
populous city continued to be of the greatest importance to Egypt, and in the eighth century before Christ a new, though not very illustrious, race of kings came thence to govern Egypt.

BRICK WITH THE PRENOMEN OF RAMESES II.

We will now quit our seat on the sheikh's tomb and wander, pencil in hand, from one mound of ruins to another. Most of the inscriptions are addressed to the gods Amon, Ptah, or Ra Harmachis. Many monuments attract our attention, but for the most part they lie half buried in the sand, and overseers are appointed who are forbidden under heavy penalties to allow strangers to clear them. The happy accident is too fresh in the memory of the inspector of excavations by which the illustrious Lepsius and his companions discovered a monument of immense im-

FORCED LABOURERS OF THE SEMITIC RACE STAMPING OUT BRICKS. (*Tomb of Rekhmara at Thebes.*)

portance which he himself had overlooked. This stone has become famous under the name of the tablet of Tanis, or the decree of Canopus. We shall find it in



FORCED LABOURERS OF THE SEMITIC RACE MAKING AND CARRYING BRICKS. (*Tomb of Rekhmara at Thebes.*)

the museum of Boolak, where it was deposited. Only cursory mention can in this place be made of a great tablet of granite, which still lies among the ruins, and which is dated by the years of an era beginning from the epoch of the Hykshos,

which occurs nowhere else;[1] of the colossus of Rameses II. in porphyry, on which there are traces of painting in various colours; of the shrine of granulated alabaster-like marble; of the female torso with the characteristics of an Amazon, the left breast being larger than the right; of the black statues of Sekhet with the lion-head, the sombre sitting figures of basalt, and the almost purple ones of red granite.

On the morning after my second sleepless night at Tanis all was bustle in front of my host's house. Numbers of fishermen had come in in their large boats, on which the nets were hung in orderly array, and offered the fish they had caught in the lake, packed in large and small baskets, for sale to the highest bidder. This auction, which takes place every Tuesday and Friday, was in every way a singular picture, and I shall never forget it.

MENEPHTAH.

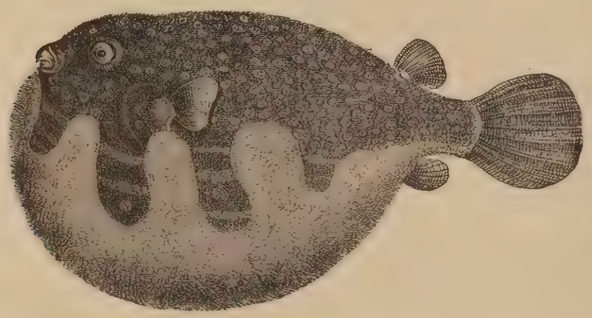
Nothing in Egypt is more purely African than the finny inhabitants of its waters. The Nile produces the same fish as the Senegal, and with their flat heads, minute eyes, and long cirri, or beards, they look as if they belong to some earlier epoch of creation than the graceful natives of our own fresh waters. By far the most common is the Shad, called Karmoot, and to the same family belongs the celebrated Electrical Shad, the Ra'ad, marked with black spots. Some of the species present an almost monstrous appearance, with their long thread-like fins on the back and belly. One of the drollest is the Fahaka, or Tetrodon, which, when blown out, looks like a pumpkin with a tail, twinkling eyes, and a little laughing mouth with four shining white teeth. The Kanooma fish, with its long snout bent downwards, is the Oxyrrhynchus of the ancient Egyptians. Perhaps the most interesting is the Finny Pike, Polypterus, which is a survivor of the primeval order of the Ganoid fishes; I do not remember ever having seen it, yet I believe it was the original of a hieroglyphic sign. In the fried or boiled stage of their existence I decidedly prefer our Northern fish to the Egyptian varieties, which are for the most part flabby and unsavoury. I have tasted many kinds, and can pay the tribute of praise to none but that known as the Bayad, of which very large specimens are caught, and which has flesh of a brilliant whiteness.

[1] A translation of this tablet, which mentions an interval of 400 years from the Shepherds to Rameses II., is given in the "Records of the Past," Vol. IV. p. 33.

The auction was a vehement business, and the dealers were not less calculated to attract the attention of an European than their wares. The passionate emotions, of which education and custom require us to control the exhibition, are here shown without concealment or check, and perhaps with the fullest unreserve when a question of "Mine" and "Thine" is to be settled. How the fishermen shout in wild confusion! how their black eyes flash and glare! how they snatch back

MALAPTERURUS ELECTRICUS—ELECTRICAL SHAD. (*Ra'ad.*)

their baskets in a rage! and how often the worthy Ahmed has to scream at them, "Wait a minute, I'm coming;" and to use his palm-rod! At the same time many a fine fish finds its way into the basket that stands behind him, for he is clever enough to temper his severity with kindliness, and whenever a hand-to-hand fight seems inevitable, he contrives to pacify the adversaries with conciliatory words and soothing gestures. What a wonderful variety of tones these people have at their



TETRODON HISPIDUS. (*Fahaka.*)

HEAD OF THE PIMELODUS AURATUS.

command to express every shade of feeling! I am thinking less of the shrieking vehemence of their anger than of the melting pathos their voices can assume in a caressing mood, or when seeking reconciliation.

Meanwhile retort answers abuse. "Where are your eyes, merchant?" shouts the fisherman, thinking the buyer's bid too small. The man, who thinks he is being cheated, cries out, "Bind a turban of straw about thine head" (be as great a fool as you will), "but never forget thy duty." Some cutting answer is given: the man who is thus reprimanded asserts himself to be as good as his antagonist, and

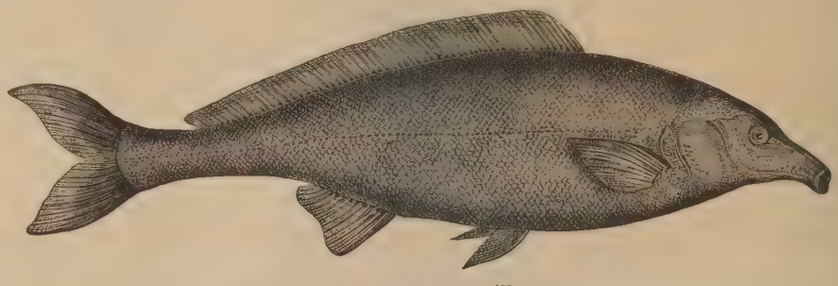
ASSEMBLY OF BIRDS ON THE LAKE OF MENZALEH.

better too; but the enemy has the nimbler wit and the sharper tongue, and retorts, "Every beast that has a hump fancies itself a camel."

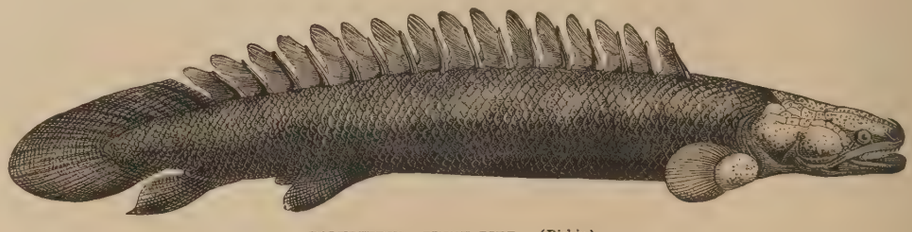
When the auction was over the fishermen wanted me to buy a pelican and two fine herons that they had caught alive. They carried home but little money, for only a certain percentage of their earnings was paid to them; the principal profits accrue to the holder of the right of fishing in the Lake of Menzaleh, which is farmed out for about £60,000.

FISH AUCTION AT SAN.

It was with a party of fishermen from the little fishing town of El Matareeyeh that I visited this remarkable inland sea, which is separated from the Mediterranean by only a narrow strip of land. It is of about the extent of the county of York, and is strewed with islets. So rich is it in waterfowl of every species that Brehm, who is a good authority, calculated that they must consume sixty thousand pounds of fish daily. The well-known story of Baron Münchhausen, who fired off his gun with his ramrod for a charge, and so shot and spitted a whole flock of ducks, here hardly seems impossible; for, particularly at breeding-time, the islands and reedy shallows of this lake are peopled with countless masses of feathered guests. The charming illustration by W. Gentz is not in the least an exaggerated representation of the scene. Ducks and shell-drakes, storks and herons, pelicans, the Aboo Monas, and the delicately-coloured flamingo—whose breeding-places are known to only a few hunters among the natives of Menzaleh—gulls and terns, dark and light hued eagles and falcons—who in their turn prey on the feathered murderers and avenge the fish—are found collected in legions in this paradise of birds. The sportsman who wanders from islet to islet can make an enormous bag, particularly when he is skilful enough to manage a little boat with his own hand. The water is in most places shallow, and overflows only the lowest of the islands during the inundation; those lying above this water-mark are called "mountains," *djebel*, by the fishermen.



MORMYSUS OXYRRHYNCHUS. (*Kanooma.*)



POLYPTERUS—FINNY PIKE. (*Bishir.*)

Vivid pictures, that I can never forget, stamped themselves on my mind as I traversed this wonderful lake in the roughly-constructed bark of the Matareeyeh fisherman: pictures of primeval nature, a silent but populous landscape, barely touched by the hand of man, affording at present much delight to the sportsman, but perhaps—indeed, it is to be hoped—before many decades are passed, to be restored to tilth and culture.

There can be no manner of doubt that broad expanses now covered by its waters were in former times fields and meadows, tilled by the peasantry, and

FISHING-BOAT ON THE LAKE OF MENZALEH.

affording pasture to the herdsman's cattle. Even at the present day, though it is connected with the sea by a narrow passage, Nile mud is deposited at the bottom of the lake; and experienced men have declared with conviction that, with the mechanical appliances of our day, it would be practicable to reconvert it into fertile land, and make it remunerative to those who might embark in the enterprise. On some of the islands there are to this day traces of ancient culture, not wholly extinct even a few centuries ago. Little remains of the city of Isis, Ta-n-Isis, on the island of Tenees, but it still shows some noble ruins; and Arab writers tell us that at the time of the Khalifate no finer tissues were woven than those produced here. The damask, fine gauze, and costly gold tissue of Tenees, or Tinnys, were famous throughout the East, and enriched the inhabitants, whose posterity have fallen indeed from their high estate, and now laboriously earn their scanty bread by net and sail.

And yet any one who has been in intercourse with these humble, simple men remembers them with kindliness. I can call to mind the crowd of figures that pressed round the large brazier, side by side with the stranger, at Matareeyeh; I can see the slight forms of the women who followed a dead body, lamenting: and I do not think that in all Egypt I met with a finer race. Faces more manly or more noble than those of the descendants of the Hykshos are nowhere to be seen throughout the Khedive's dominions. Like all Asiatics of Semitic origin, they were called "Amu" under the Pharaohs, and then Biamites, *i.e.*, Pi-Amu. Even in the eighth and ninth centuries after Christ they gave much trouble to the Khalifs Merwân II. and Mamoon. The name of Malakeeyeen, which they themselves adopted, dates from the time when they embraced Christianity. When the rest of the

WATER-WHEEL FOR IRRIGATION IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF DAMIETTA.

Egyptians adopted the teaching of Eutyches, the determined Biamites remained faithful to the orthodox doctrine, and called themselves Melekites, or "imperial." They remained unsubdued by the French, and it is only within a short time—in fact only a very few years—that the magistrates have dared to enlist their sons under the conscription for military service. The Lake of Menzaleh has had a new and perfectly straight eastern boundary set to it by the construction of the Suez Canal.

We will now turn westward, and in the neighbourhood of Damietta, Damyât, and the mouth of the ancient Phatnitic branch of the Nile—now the river of Damietta—we come upon a type of landscape which, though it is flat and level like the whole of the Delta, nevertheless has peculiarities of its own. The eye of the European will, in the first place, be struck by the neatly-planted fields of rice, which is here a favourite crop; and a harvest, which well repays the cultivator, is reaped in September or October. This cereal, it is true, was not unknown to the Egyptians at the time of Alexander's Macedonian successors, but

it was the Arabs who first introduced its culture on a large scale from its Indian habitat to the shores of the Nile.

There is little to be said about Damietta itself; a sand-bank bars the entrance to the harbour, which is surrounded by tall but ill-built houses. The Bazaar is of unusual length; some fine pillars from ancient buildings are found in the mosques, and there are splendid gardens outside the gates. The most beautiful belongs to the German Consul, a wealthy and most worthy Levantine named Suroor. Damyât at the present day contains from thirty to forty thousand inhabitants. It was not famous in antiquity: under the Arabs it was esteemed for woven stuffs, and workshops where the Christians manufactured the finest furniture-stuffs, ornamented with pictures and patterns, as well as brocades for dresses, one of which was valued at three hundred dinars, or forty pounds. It owes its place in history to its long siege and final conquest by the Crusaders.[1]

NYMPHÆA LOTUS—LOTUS-FLOWER.

Among the farmhouses in the vicinity of Damietta sycamores of great girth and tall in proportion are to be seen, and other fine trees also grow near and shade the villages. Peach and other fruit trees flourish in the gardens. The clatter of water-wheels, driven by buffaloes, is audible on every side, pouring an abundance of water into the irrigation canals and the open runlets which convey it through the fields. Cattle certainly thrives here, and the buffaloes and oxen, the butter and cheese of the neighbourhood of Damietta have no equals throughout Egypt. The botanist who seeks rare plants in the water-channels will here find the last representatives of a species formerly so abundant in the Nile—the lotus-flower, both white and blue; its seeds when ground are still eaten by the peasants. But the plant, which was once the queen of all the products of the Delta, and which brought enormous wealth to the inhabitants, the Papyrus, has not been seen here by any trustworthy traveller. And yet it was here, on the very branch

NYMPHÆA NELUMBO—LOTUS-FLOWER, WITH FRUIT.

[1] By Jean de Brienne, A.D. 1217; it was lost, but retaken by Louis IX. A.D. 1248.

of the Nile which bathes this ground to the present day, that the most valuable variety of the Cyperus—to which our "paper" owes its name—was grown; nor was it for ancient Egypt only, but for every cultivated nation on the Mediterranean that this writing material was prepared from its pith. Manufactories of papyrus "paper" existed in the Delta down to the time of the Khalifs, but parchment was already competing with the Egyptian material, which was of such importance as an article of commerce that Firmus, a citizen of Alexandria who set himself up as emperor in opposition to Aurelian,[1] could declare that his manufactories of papyrus brought him in a revenue large enough to maintain an army. In consequence of the introduction of new writing materials into Europe—parchment and rag-paper—the physiognomy of the Delta must have undergone a complete transformation. In the place of those thickets which have been described as "a forest without branches, a shrubbery without leaves, a harvest in the water, a scene of beauty in a bog," we now see rice, maize, indigo, and cotton fields. Every recollection even of the plant which for so many hundred years was so carefully tended, and which Strabo so graphically describes as "a bare stick with a tuft at the top," has been lost to the natives of the Delta. The European sees it in hot-houses, or may have met with it on the shores of the Anapo while travelling to Syracuse, in Sicily,[2] little thinking, perhaps, that he has every day occasion to use words and ideas which owe their origin to the Egyptian reed.

PAPYRUS PLANT.

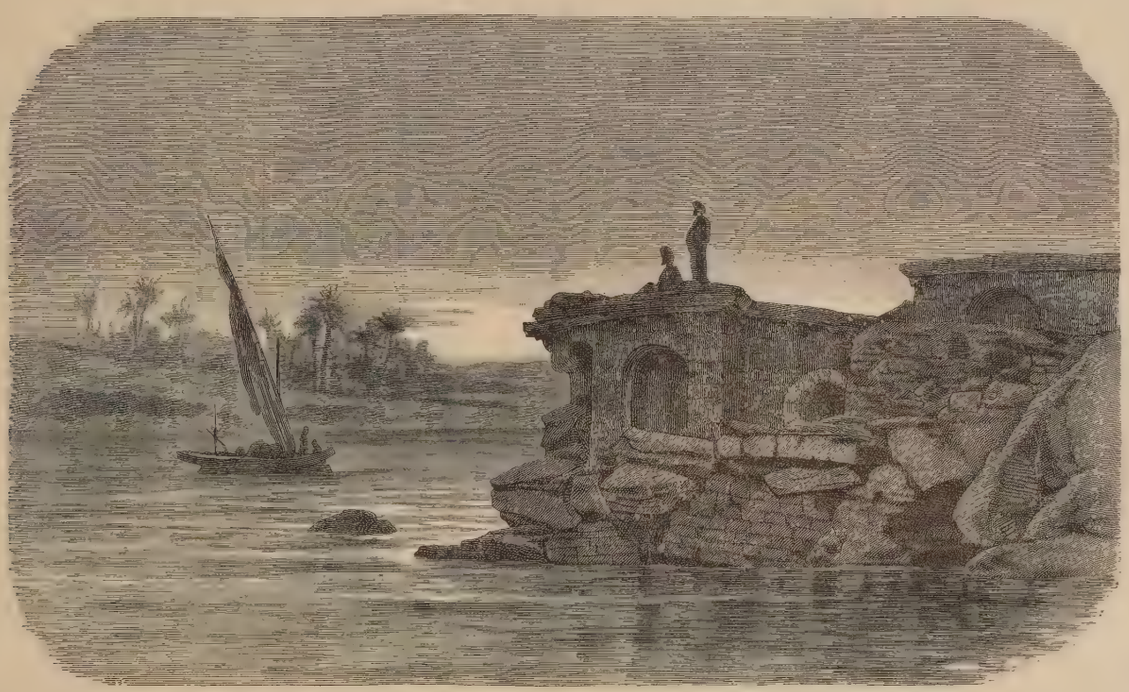
Papyrus and *Byblus* are different forms of the same word: from the first we derive our word "paper," from the second the word "Bible." The celebrated writing material was prepared by slicing the pith of the stem into thin *laminæ*, which were laid side by side and overlapping each other, pressed together, and smoothed. The sheets thus prepared were stuck together to form a sheet, and the first leaf was known as the "protocollon," hence the word "protocol." Long sheets of papyrus could of course be preserved only in rolls; thus each book was a roll, and the part assigned to each actor in German theatrical parlance is still called his "rolle," in French, "rôle." The ancient Egyptians were accustomed to write with inks of two colours: the main text being transcribed with black ink, while red (rubra) was used for distinguishing the beginnings of

[1] A.D. 274; he coined money and assumed the purple, but was soon defeated and put to death.

[2] Thickets of Papyri have been also found at the Lake Merom, in Syria.

sections ;[1] hence the word "rubric." Charta, or carta, was the name commonly given to this paper by the Romans,[2] and it has given us the word "card."

We know the various kinds of Egyptian paper, which were sometimes designated by the names of their place of manufactory, as Saitica, or Tanitica ; sometimes after some person of distinction, as Liviana,[3] Corneliana ;[4] sometimes according to the purpose for which they were intended, as hieratic, writing paper, theatre-ticket paper, or bag paper ;[5] and papyrus rolls of remarkable size, and in admirable preservation, have come down to us. This writing material was invented in Egypt at the earliest in the time of the Pyramids ;[6] but it was most lavishly used at the time when Alexandria was in its glory.



RIVER WALL ON THE DAMIETTA ARM OF THE NILE.

The papyrus grown in the Sebennytic district was particularly famous. On the site of the chief town of this nome, or government, where the historian Manetho was born, now stands the miserable town of Semennood, on the left bank of the Damietta branch, along which we once sailed up stream from Mansoorah.

Mansoorah the Victorious is, next to Tantah, the most important inland town of the Delta, and the chief town of the wealthy province of Dakheleeyeh, where numerous Europeans—principally Greeks, but also English, Germans, and Swiss—have settled, and carry on a trade principally in cotton. Mansoorah is a compara-

[1] The black was an animal carbon, the red colour an ochre.

[2] The word "chartes" is found in Greek, and mentioned in an Athenian inscription of the time of Pericles ; it was not, however, in much use among the Greeks till the time of Alexander the Great.

[3] From Livia, wife of Augustus, who died A.D. 29.

[4] After Cornelius Gallus, A.D. 26.

[5] Taeniotica, a coarse kind sold by weight.

[6] The oldest written dated Papyrus is of about the time of the Vth dynasty.

tively modern town, for it was built by command of the Sultan Melek el Kâmil during the Crusades, after the taking of Rosetta by the Christians (about 1220). A fortified bridge, close to the town, at that time connected the two shores of the Nile; while at the present day the opposite suburb of Talkha, where the railway-station is, can only be reached by taking a boat. However, the construction of an iron bridge, with a double line of rails, is about to be begun.

There is little to tell about the present town of Mansoorah, but stirring memories revive in our mind as we seek for the humble spot where one of the most powerful kings of the West is said to have lingered a captive. Louis IX. of France was conquered before the walls of Mansoorah by the army led by the young Sultan el Mo'azzam Tooranshah, and was forced to yield to the infidels with his brother, Charles of Anjou, and the flower of French chivalry.[1] The Sultan treated his captive foe with consideration, but he met his death at the hand of his own warriors, while Louis, at the cost of an enormous ransom and the evacuation of the town of Damietta, regained his freedom and that of his fellow-captives.

With a favourable wind we may reach Behbeet el Hagar in two hours from Mansoorah, and it is one of the most remarkable of all the ruined cities of Egypt. The sight of the well-tilled fields on each side of the stream delights the eye as we sail along. Opposite the village of el Weesh I disembarked on an ancient river-wall, or quay; and, as I turned my face landwards, I could almost believe myself transported to my own country, for I rarely met with any palm-trees, but my road lay through white poplars, lime-trees, and willows; among which, however, grew Sont-trees and Lebbek, Tamarisk, and Bernouf shrubs. I walked quickly on, and in about half an hour found myself in front of the plainly recognisable traces of a wall enclosing a gigantic heap of ruins, the remains of the splendid temple of Pa-Hebit—that is to say, "the strong place"—where the great goddess was worshipped from whose name the Romans called this town Iseum. The streets and squares of the ancient city have completely disappeared; not a vestige of the dwellings of early ages can be detected among the huts of the fellaheen of the village of Behbeet; but here, as everywhere in Egypt, the abodes of the gods were built of more durable materials than those of man, and the granite ruins of the temple of Isis at Hebit are strong enough to defy many a century to come. There they lie, within the ancient temple precincts, one mighty mass of blocks, portions of pillars, fragments of architraves, slabs, and flights of steps. I have never seen anything more strange and impressive than this temple, fallen, as it might seem, at the command of a magician. Neither the slow injuries of time, nor the feeble hand of man could have effected the sudden and utter ruin of this edifice of granite. An earthquake felled it at one shock, and the legendary memory of such a catastrophe, as well as of the sacred beasts of the cow-headed goddess, survives in the minds of the fellaheen, for Isis long commanded the deepest veneration in this place, and her image is preserved on many stones. While I was resting by the ruins a man of Behbeet told me the following story, which is familiar to every inhabitant of the village:—"In the time of Solomon a beautiful temple stood here

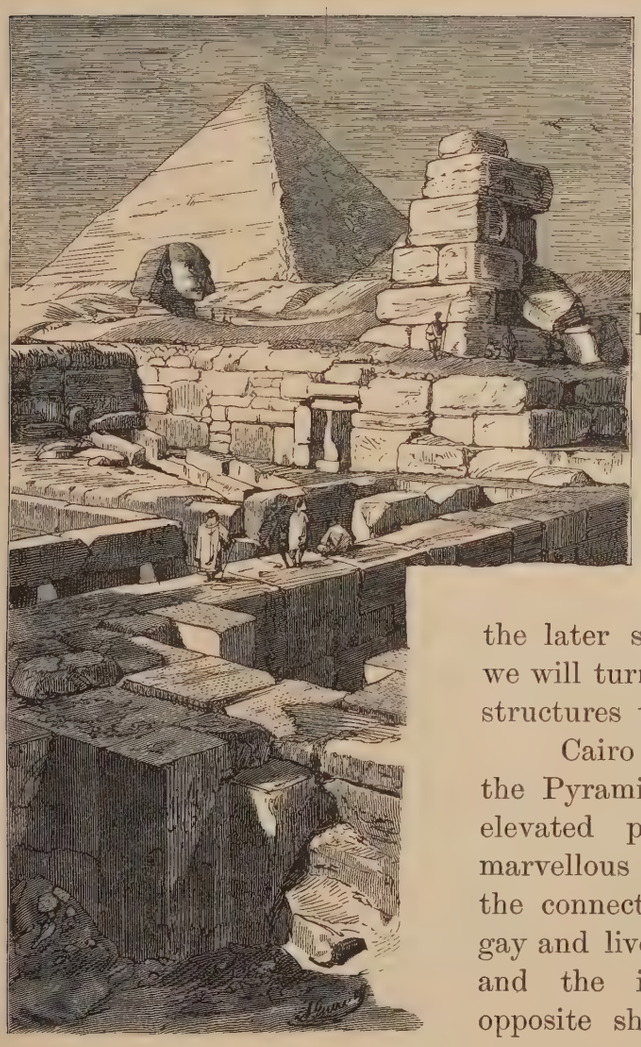
[1] A.D. 1250.

in which there dwelt a cow sent by God, and which no one dared touch. Once upon a time there was a woman who wanted the cow to give milk for her new-born child; she went secretly into the temple and attempted to milk the cow, but the udders yielded no milk; then the woman cursed the cow, and hardly had she uttered the last word when the huge building fell in with a fearful crash, and buried the blasphemous woman and her child under the ruins. If any one strikes the stones in the evening the cow is heard lowing. Many of the folks of the village have heard it, and they call our ruins here Hagar gamoos, or 'the buffalo stones.'"

What a splendid spectacle this temple must have presented when the sunshine was reflected on the polished grey and brown granite of which it was constructed! Hundreds of the blocks have preserved the pictures and inscriptions which were chiselled on their surface with peculiar care, and they tell us that the ruined sanctuary of Isis was erected (B.C. 287 to 247) by Ptolemy II., Philadelphus. No record remains of the time of its fall, and it will never be possible to verify the plan of the foundation, for though so many blocks lie heaped up, literally not one stone remains upon the other. It takes four hundred paces to walk round the high mound of ruins, and to climb to the top is like climbing a mountain of granite. Very possibly the pavement of the temple-court lies preserved under the superincumbent soil, for very little corn grows within its precincts near the pool which indicates the situation of the sacred tank, which no Egyptian temple was ever without.

Before nightfall I got back to Mansoorah, whence it would be easy to reach the recently discovered ruins of Mendes, the city of the sacred ram. But we must leave it unvisited, for we are anxious to turn southwards, to the Pyramids and Cairo, the very heart of Egyptian life.

THE MAIN STREAM OF THE NILE.



Memphis and the Pyramids.

RE reaching the city of the Khalifs—long ere we arrive at the station of Kalyoob—the Pyramids are seen on the distant horizon.[1] They are the tokens of Cairo, and it is with them that the most ancient records are connected of that vanished metropolis of which Cairo may be regarded as the later successor. So, before we enter the town, we will turn our steps to Memphis and the venerable structures that stand on the soil of its Necropolis.

Cairo has been constantly called the City of the Pyramids, and not without justice; from every elevated position the simple outlines of these marvellous structures are conspicuous; nevertheless, the connection is but a superficial one between the gay and lively capital on the eastern bank of the Nile and the imperishable masses of stone on the opposite shore. Cairo has gazed at the Pyramids

[1] The hieroglyphic word "per-am-us" (edge of the Pyramid) is the supposed origin of the word to which many fanciful derivations have been given. The solid content was called "abumir," the word "peramus" meaning the four lines of the angles of the face or edge.

ever since its foundations were dug, but the most ancient of the Pyramids had seen the lapse of four thousand years before the first stone of the first house in Cairo was laid.

The capital with its lofty citadel is but an upstart that has thriven rapidly, and come into its vast fortune early by the overthrow of a reverend predecessor. Memphis fell, and Cairo grew out of its ruins. This is literally the fact, for, in the first place, the citizens of the old residence of the Pharaohs moved and settled in the city, which immediately it was founded by Amroo, Omar's general,[1] increased very rapidly; and, in the second place, the ancient palaces of Memphis were pulled down, and the beautiful polished ornaments and stone slabs were conveyed across the Nile, and used for the foundation-stones of new buildings or the construction of strong walls. Monuments of marble and alabaster were broken up and burnt for lime. Many of the pillars, too, in the older mosque of Cairo were derived from the temples of Memphis. The old city was in short a quarry, with the stones ready wrought: and it was not spared; nay, so recklessly worked, that nothing—absolutely nothing—remains of the largest and most ancient city in Egypt at this day but some mounds of rubbish and a few more or less damaged monumental fragments.

The streets and squares, the palaces and temples, the academies and fortifications where so many hundred thousands of Memphites lived and worked, toiled and prayed, struggled and rested, laboured and thought, were joyful in time of peace or fought fiercely in time of war—all have vanished from the face of the earth. Memphis—the city of the living—is no more; but the Necropolis of Memphis—the city of the dead—has been as wonderfully preserved as though it had some share in the immortality of the souls of its inhabitants that rest in Osiris. Here, if anywhere, is the spot for recalling the striking saying by which the Greeks were wont to express the character of the Egyptian temperament: "They regarded their house as an inn, and their grave as an eternal home; their life on earth as a brief sojourn, and their death as true life!" And their burial-places have, in fact, outlived their cities, and their tombs have perpetuated the memory of their life to our time.

There is no more venerable site of human culture than that we propose to visit to-day, and no more ancient monuments than those we shall find there. Usually those who go to see the Pyramids first visit the Necropolis; we shall take our own way, and make acquaintance with the city of the living before we tread the city of the dead. We are bound by no considerations of time and comfort, so we prefer to entrust ourselves to a Nile-boat rather than take the railway which cuts across the province of Memphis, and we disembark at Bedrasheyn, a large fellah village. The palm-groves that surround it are among the finest in Egypt—and how could they be other than flourishing? for they are rooted in a soil where stood for ages the most populous city in the world. It is delicious to ride on the dyke road that traverses these groves, for under the palm crowns it is never altogether sunny or shady, and the incessant play of light and

[1] A.D. 641.

THE VILLAGE OF BEDRASHEYN.

shade relieves us from any sense of monotony; and yet, taken separately, the trees of this extensive wood are exactly like each other, with their columnar trunks and feathered crowns. They all seem formed on one pattern—a beautiful one, it is true—and they are far from exhibiting the various individuality of our oaks and beeches.

In the little harbour of the village of Bedrasheyn lie large bundles of the ribs of the palm-leaves stripped of their feathery blades, and a strange spectacle is offered when the fellaheen climb up the smooth trunks and tie themselves to the summit of the tree, while they bend down the branches to fertilise the blossoms, or to gather the long bunches of dates.

FAÇADE OF A TOMB.

Behind the palm-groves spread green and well-tilled fields; from the highest mound of ruins on the plain we can overlook the whole wide-spreading landscape once occupied by the famous city of the Pyramids.

There stand the houses of the Arab village of Mitraheeneh and to the south-west of it the villa of a wealthy Armenian, while south-east of it are the most considerable remains of the city; those most to the north belonging to a temple, while on the south the fallen colossus of Rameses II. may be seen. In a hut close by are preserved the fragments of the monuments discovered by Mariette Pacha in the soil of Memphis.

Looking towards the east nothing is to be seen but palm-trees and fields; but if we turn our eyes towards the west, beyond the cultivated land, and take in the whole extent of the horizon, our attention is rivetted by a marvellous panorama. It is true that the yellow limestone range which closes in the view like a wall with its bare and barren cliffs is neither varied in character, nor impressively high, nor pleasing in outline; but, instead of picturesque peaks and far-gleaming glaciers, as far as the eye can reach it is overtopped by pyramids. These hills of human workmanship stand in groups, and are various as to size and shape. It is as though they had grown together with the rock on which they stand, and were no less enduring.

If the citadel of Memphis and the king's palace stood on the hill from whose summit we are now gazing westward, the site was happily chosen. It was Lepsius who pointed out that this is the only spot far and wide whence a view could be obtained commanding the whole of Memphis, and whence each royal builder could watch the progress of his own Pyramid. Even the most northern group, that of Aboo Roâsh, could probably have been seen from here before it was destroyed.[1] Now, at the very northernmost spot on the horizon, rise the greatest of the Pyramids,[2] named after the village of Gheezeh, and, farther to the south, the groups of Zaweyet el 'Aryan[3] and of Abuseer.[4] To the west, and not so remote, rise the proud steps of

[1] The name of the monarch who built this pyramid is not known.
[2] Built by Cheops, of the IVth dynasty.
[3] Built by Userenra or Rathures.
[4] Built by Sahura, of the Vth dynasty.

A CITIZEN OF MEMPHIS.

the Pyramid of Sakkarah[1] with its sadly injured sisters, and farther south again the group of Dahshoor,[2] exhibiting the curious peculiarity of a bent pyramid. The most southerly pyramids of all, which are invisible from our hill, do not belong properly to the Necropolis of Memphis; but, even without counting them, here are above eighty of these wonderful mausoleums. And what numbers of tombs, with more or less richly-decorated façades, have their openings in the face of the limestone cliff, and are covered with sand! The enormous extent of this, the vastest of all cemeteries—which, if we include the Pyramid of Meydoom,[3] covers a stretch of country more than forty-five miles long—affords us a standard for estimating on one hand the magnitude and on the other the duration of the ancient city of Memphis.

PTAH, THE GOD OF MEMPHIS.

BULL APIS.

Menes, the first king of Egypt, is said to have founded this city. Its name, in Egyptian—Men-nefer, signifies "the good place." The priests told Herodotus that the Pharaoh, in order to make a site of suitable extent for his magnificent buildings, was forced to divert the stream of the river into a new channel, which divided the fertile land lying between the Libyan and Arabian ranges into two equal halves, and the dams constructed by Menes to the south of the city were, when Herodotus travelled in Egypt (about 454 before Christ), still carefully kept up and annually restored by the Persian Governors. Traces of them may still be seen. After fortifying the site, and carefully attending to the necessary regulation of the inundation of the Nile, Menes raised a sanctuary to the god Ptah, which during the many ages that the city endured continued to be its central point, and was added to and enriched by all the Pharaohs, even down to the time of the Roman emperors.

Foremost in rank of all the Egyptian gods, as being the eldest and first of them all, stood the primeval and venerable divinity Ptah[4] of Memphis. He was called the creator, from whom the germ and at the same time the laws and conditions of all being proceeded. He, "the beginning and the beginner," was also the chief of the divinities of light, and was called the creator of the egg from which, when he had broken it, the sun and moon came forth. "Ptah" means "the opener," and Ptah-*Sokar*-Osiris[5]—who was ruler of the Necropolis of Memphis, and

[1] Age unknown; supposed tomb of the early Apis bulls. The building perhaps as old as the IInd dynasty.

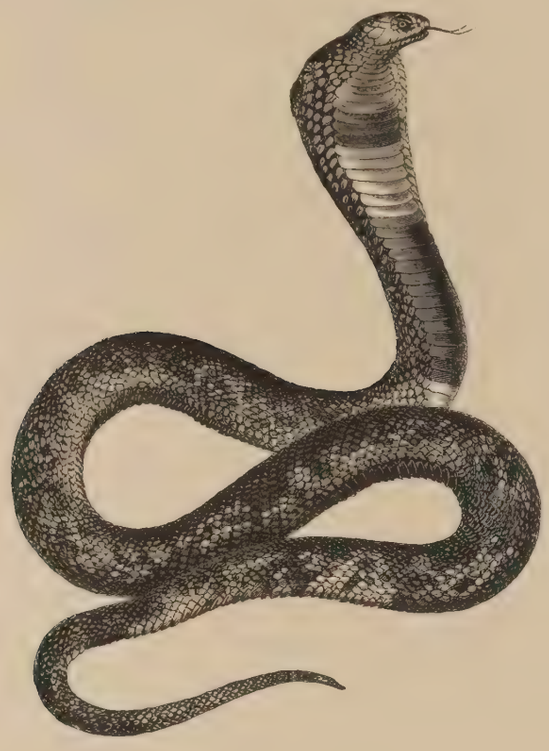
[2] Built by Unas, or Onnos, last king of the Vth dynasty; anciently called *Nefer setu*, "the most beautiful place." Pyramid known as the modern Mastabat-el-Faraoun.

[3] Built by Senefou, of the IIIrd dynasty; the pyramid was called *Kha*, or "the rising one." Each pyramid had its special name placed in the inscriptions after that of the monarch who built it.

[4] Ptah appears as a mere deity wearing a skull-cap, covered with a collar and counterpoise, and holding a dog-headed sceptre, the *uas*, sometimes combined with the Tat, or so-called emblem of stability, and standing on a pedestal in the shape of truth or a cubit; gods and men were said to come out of his mouth.

[5] A later form of the same god allied with the solar Seker, or Socharis, and with Osiris represented as a naked embryonic dwarf wearing a cap and beetle, scarab, on his head. The numerous figures and representations of him are not older than the XXVIth dynasty, or the seventh century B.C.

whose name is preserved in that of the village of Sakkarah—bestows on the departed sun its power of rising again, and on departed souls a resurrection to eternal life on the other side of the grave. Apis was the animal sacred to Ptah,[1] and was carefully tended in his temple. He lay on a soft couch behind a curtain of costly material, was fed on a broth of wheat-flour and pearl-wheat, with milk and honey-cakes, and a harem of cows was kept for him in an adjacent building. Even his mother had reverence paid her, was splendidly tended, and had a stall of her own. The number of his servants was very great, and greater still that of his votaries, for the power of seeing into futurity was ascribed to him. It is true he could answer the questions put with no more than "yes" and "no." If he accepted the food offered him by a worshipper, the oracle was favourable; if he scorned it, things looked badly for the matter he was appealed to to decide upon. It betokened death to the astronomer Eudoxus of Cnidus when the bull licked his garment instead of eating out of his hand, and Germanicus died soon after the oracle of Apis had pronounced itself unfavourable to him. Besides the bull Apis a sacred serpent was worshipped here; on the lake or tank, which was never wanting in an Egyptian temple, floated elegant boats dedicated to the god, and a sacred grove grew on its banks. All the Pharaohs who caused their bodies to be interred in Pyramids were worshippers of Ptah in this sanctuary, and its high-priest, the "Sam,"[2] was the first in rank of all the priesthood of Egypt. The king frequently conferred this dignity on his own sons; it survived the dominion of the Hykshos, and at the time of the greatest splendour of the Pharaohs was borne by Khamus,[3] the son and heir of the great Rameses, who, however, died before his father. This powerful prince, known to the Greeks as Sesostris, who decorated almost every city on the Nile with monuments of his triumphs, bestowed a special favour on this temple, gracing it with colossal statues of himself, which were erected before its gate.



SACRED URÆUS SNAKE.

We know the occurrence which gave rise to the dedication of these statues. When Sesostris—so the Greek traveller was told—came home from one of his warlike expeditions, the faithless viceroy whom he had left behind in the Nile valley received him at the frontier town of Pelusium with a costly banquet, and

[1] He was called the "second life" of Ptah. His sepulchre was at the Serapeum of Sakkarah from the time of Amenophis III. to the Roman Empire, until about B.C. 30.

[2] A sacerdotal title supposed to mean "foreman."

[3] Appointed Viceroy of Memphis, he was buried amidst the Apis bulls in the Serapeum of Sakkarah.

then had the wooden palace, which had been erected for the occasion, set on fire, after the king and his family had retired to rest, intoxicated from the feast. Rameses was miraculously preserved, and in his deep gratitude he decorated the temple of Ptah with those colossi, one of which—the solitary monument of any size that marks the site of the city, the living city, of Memphis—lies at a thousand paces to the south-west of the village of Mitraheeneh, extended on the soil and kissing the earth. This stone giant, which is more than seven times the height of a man, belongs to the English, and perhaps may some day follow the obelisk of Alexandria to the banks of the Thames.

Although after the expulsion of the Hykshos the residence of the Pharaohs was transferred from Memphis to Thebes, the city of Menes was highly prosperous, even in later times. Its harbour on the Nile, which is frequently mentioned, was an emporium for all the produce of the country, and the commerce of Memphis was not restricted to the Nile valley. A special quarter was given up to Phœnician merchants and their factories. Here stood the temple of the Aphrodite of the foreigners, Astarte-Ashera, with its sacred grove, in which the youth of the city gathered together to do honour to the goddess. This part of the city was the centre of pleasure, while in the purely Egyptian quarters the citizens lived quietly and in strict morality. A great variety of handicrafts were practised here, and science was held in high esteem among the priests of the highest class. The schools which were attached to the temples of Ptah, of his son Imhotep,[1] and of other gods were very famous, and many writings, of which their disciples were the authors, have come down to us. The Pharaohs who lived at Thebes visited Memphis from time to time, and its citadel was at all times regarded as one of the most important bulwarks of the kingdom. It was still famous among the Greeks as "the White Wall," by which name it was also known to the Egyptians; and the monuments, as well as the classical writers, speak of many sieges of this citadel and of many stormings of the walls of Memphis. Assyrians and Persians did not regard Egypt as conquered until this "White Wall" had fallen, and the soldiers' quarter, which lay within it, must have been densely populated. Memphis was not only one of the most populous, but one of the most extensive cities of antiquity, and even late into the period of its decay it was half a day's journey to walk through it from north to south.

The first fatal blow to its greatness fell when Philip's son founded Alexandria,[2] and so created as it were a new heart for Egypt, which at once became the source and the recipient of all its vital streams. Then, when the hosts of Islam overran the Nile valley, and their leaders, avoiding Alexandria and Memphis, founded Fostât,[3] adjoining the old Roman castle of Babylon, on the eastern shore of the Nile, and fixed their residence there, the new town—which subsequently developed into the city of Cairo—absorbed all the privileges and possessions of the ancient city of the Pyramids, and in a very few centuries Memphis was no more than a city of ruins, though, indeed, of ruins that had no equal. It is not more than seven centuries

[1] Called Imouthos or Æsculapius by the Greeks. He does not appear honoured earlier than the time of the Ptolemies, although a king of the VIth dynasty bore his name.

[2] B.C. 331.

[3] A.D. 641.

FALLEN COLOSSUS OF RAMESES II.

since the learned and trustworthy Abd-al Lateef, of Bagdad, visited Memphis and wrote down what he saw there. "Enormous as are the extent and antiquity of this city," he says, "in spite of the frequent change of governments whose yoke it has borne, and the great pains more than one nation has been at to destroy it, to sweep its last trace from the face of the earth, to carry away the stones and materials of which it was constructed, to mutilate the statues that adorned it; in spite, finally, of all that more than four thousand years have done in addition to man, these ruins still offer to the eye of the beholder a mass of marvels which bewilder the senses, and which the most skilful pen must fail to describe. The more deeply we contemplate this city the more our admiration rises, and every fresh glance at the ruins is a fresh source of delight."

We cannot here enumerate all the different monuments which Abd-al Lateef admired, and they have now long since vanished. By the "lions" which stood facing each other he no doubt means sphinxes. The whole soil was covered with ruins, and the mass of broken statues—among which lay the above-mentioned one of Rameses II.—was enormous. After Abd-al Lateef the gradually diminishing remains of Memphis are rarely mentioned; stone by stone they were transported across the Nile, and many a noble work of art was destroyed by the folly of fanaticism. Thus, in the middle of the fifteenth century, an Emir caused the destruction of the much-admired "green shrine," which was formed out of a single enormous block of a stone as hard as iron, and ornamented with figures and inscriptions. It was smashed to pieces. The golden statue, with eyes of precious stones, which had once been enshrined in this marvel of art—dedicated, probably, to the moon-god Chonsu—had long before disappeared. Abd-al Lateef describes the thirst for gold of his contemporaries with deep indignation; he calls it a disease, and relates how the ruins of Memphis had been systematically searched through and through in every spot, even the most unlikely, by treasure-seekers, to whom everything they could find was acceptable. The bronze clamps were torn from the walls, the hinges from the door-posts, and the statues bored into to search for treasure within. They crept into the clefts in the hills like thieves into a house; crawling on their faces, they slipped into every cranny in the hill-side, and many of them lost what they already had in these fruitless searches; while others who were penniless misled rich folks to their ruin, persuading them to risk their fortune, and at the same time their common-sense, in the hope of discovering great treasure. A thousand failures were at once forgotten as soon as a rich find was reported; but at last the plundered ruins could no longer yield even the smallest reward to the severest labour, till the husbandman expelled the treasure-seeker, and compelled the soil of Memphis to produce nobler wealth in the form of corn and fruit-trees.[1]

Now, as we turn westwards, and wander among the yellow sandy Pyramids and the wide expanse of tombs, we know what sort of city it was that laid her dead to their eternal rest in this vastest of graveyards. We will begin our excursion from the north, and first visit the largest Pyramids, called, from the village in their neighbourhood, the Pyramids of Ghizeh. We can reach them from our

[1] Abd-al Lateef was translated into French by Sylvestre de Sacy, 1810.

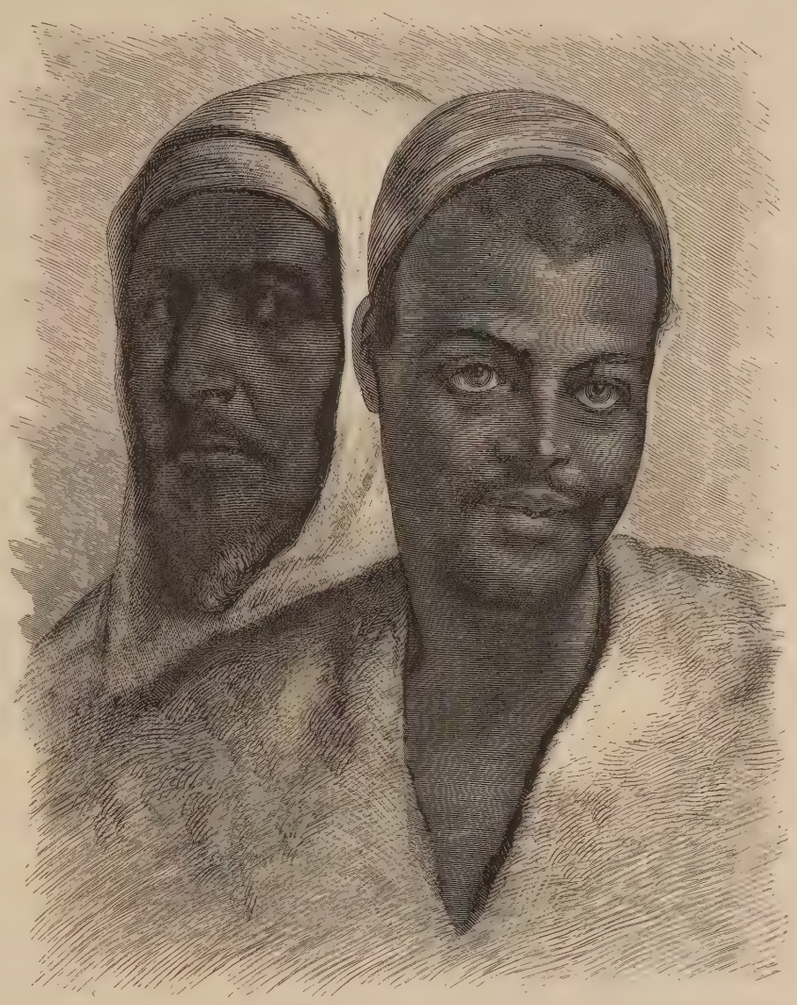
inn in a comfortable conveyance after a rather long hour's drive. A visit to the Pyramids is a favourite Sunday "outing" with the Cairenes, and there is scarcely any "excursion" by land which can compare with it for the charm and variety of the feelings it gives rise to.

In the early morning sunshine the carriage, drawn by brisk horses, rattles across the iron bridge over the Nile which connects Cairo with the beautiful island of Ghezeereh; this, with its castle and the western channel of the river that bathes it, is soon left behind us. The well-kept road runs as straight as a line under the

AT THE FOOT OF THE PYRAMID OF CHEOPS.

shade of lebbek-trees; the castle and the viceregal gardens of Ghizeh, enclosed by walls, lie to our left; the dewy verdure of the fields, intersected by canals, refreshes the eye, and a delicate blue mist veils the western horizon. The air has that purity and that aromatic freshness which are peculiar to a winter morning in Egypt. Now the misty curtain that floats over the western landscape parts for a moment —the Pyramids are before us, with their sharp triangular outline; but the mist falls again. Right and left we see now wading buffaloes, now flocks of herons; here a solitary pelican within easy shot of our carriage, there half-naked labourers at their daily work, and their villages standing remote from the road. There soar two large grey eagles; the eye follows their flight, and, glancing upwards, perceives that the fog is disappearing by degrees, that the blue sky is growing brighter, till at last the sun shoots out his level rays in unshrouded splendour. At this hour, in the

time of the Pharaohs, the hymns of praise of the priests rang out from the temple-doors hailing the child Horus, the god of light,[1] who had vanquished Seth, his father's foe—darkness and its allies, the fog and mist; the struggle was over, and there was a truce during the hours of daylight, but it would begin again in the evening, and end in the sun-god being worsted; he, on his side, must sink into the nether world, to return victorious on the following morning. "The child is the father of the man:" the child Horus has become the mighty sun-god Ra.



BEDAWEEN AND FELLAH.

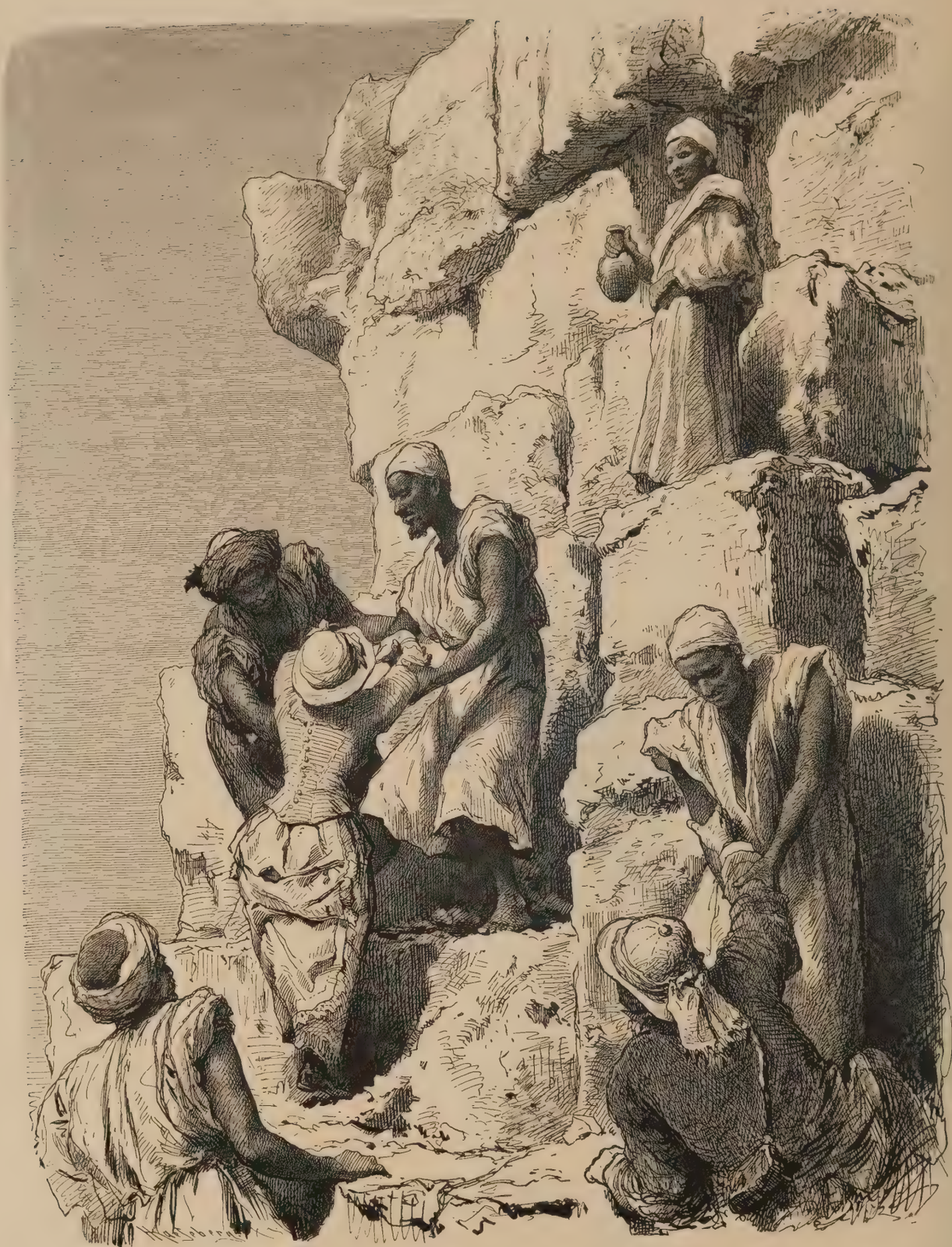
It is now bright and hot; before us the Pyramids stand unveiled, scarred with the injuries they have suffered in the course of ages. The horses now moderate their pace, for the road begins to mount, and a wall shuts it in on either hand; this was constructed as a protection against another enemy—the ally and minister of the same god as rules the darkness—against that foe to all life, the sand of the desert. His dominion extends as far as the desert reaches; where waters gleam and plains are verdurous, Osiris and his children wield the sceptre. Even where moisture reaches the fringe of the desert herbs and trees thrive. When Osiris—so runs the myth—embraced the wife of Seth, he left his wreath of melilot on her couch.[2]

This piece of the road is constantly covered with sand in spite of the wall. An inn, now abandoned, is left on our right; the road takes a sharp curve, and soon the panting horses halt on the rocky plateau where the highest of the Pyramids stand.

We find ourselves in front of the largest of those structures, which were esteemed by the ancients as wonders of the world. It is unnecessary to describe them, for the stereometrical form which took its name from them is familiar to all; nor is this the place for a numerical estimate of their size and bulk. It is only by comparison

[1] In the later inscriptions Horus appears in the disk or orb of the sun in the first hour of the day. Horus is the youthful or nascent sun; as such he is Har-pa-chrat, or Harpocrates, a name meaning Horus, the child.

[2] Plutarch, "De Iside," 14. The goddess, wife of Seth or Typhon, was Nephthys, sister of Isis.



ASCENT OF THE GREAT PYRAMID.

THE PYRAMIDS AND SPHINX.

with other objects more present to our mind's eye that we can form any idea of their size; thus we will only say that, while St. Peter's at Rome is 131 mètres high (430 feet), the great Pyramid of Cheops, if its summit were perfect, would measure 147 mètres (or 482 feet), thus being 52 feet the taller; so that, if the Pyramid of Cheops were hollow, the great Roman cathedral could stand within it like a clock under a glass shade. Neither the great church of St. Stephen at Vienna, nor the cathedral at Strasburg is as high as the great pyramid, and no building in England approaches it. St. Paul's, in London, as is well known, would stand within St. Peter's, and is just 100 feet lower than the pyramid. Old St. Paul's, the spire of which was destroyed by lightning in 1561, and the building itself in the fire of London in 1666, was somewhat taller; the tower, too, of the new cathedral at Cologne, just finished, exceeds it in height.[1] In one respect no other building in the world can in the remotest degree compare with the Pyramids, and that is in the mass and weight of the materials used in their construction.[2] If the great mausoleum of Cheops were pulled down, a wall could be built all round the frontier of France with the stones. When a good pistol is fired from the top of the great pyramid, aiming horizontally, the ball falls about half-way down the side. By such comparisons as these, they who cannot have the advantage of visiting Egypt may form a vivid conception of the dimensions of these enormous structures; the traveller who stands on the sandy platform face to face with them, and gazes up at their summits, needs no such aids to his imagination.

We get out of the carriage on the northern side of the great pyramid; in the sharply-defined triangular shadow squat groups of women selling oranges and various cates, donkey-boys are waiting with their grey steeds, and travellers are taking a rest after having accomplished the ascent of the pyramid. This labour now lies before us, and if we were disposed to shirk it, there would be no lack of attacks on our indolent resolve, for from the instant when we stepped out of the carriage we have been closely pursued by a ragged crowd of brown and sinewy guides, vehemently offering their assistance. They proudly call themselves "Bedaween," though they have nothing in common with the true "sons of the desert" but their faults. Nevertheless, it is not only advisable but necessary to have recourse to their help, although the way up can scarcely be missed.

We begin to mount at a spot where the falling away of the external stone casing of the pyramid leaves the step-like interior structure most exposed, and all the way to the top we are on a sort of stairs of smooth-hewn stone; but the steps are unequal, and sometimes of considerable height—some half as high as a man. Two or three stout lads accompany me; one springs up first with his bare feet, holds my hands, and drags me after him; another follows, shoves behind, and heaves me forward; a third takes me under the arm, and lifts. Thus I half scramble up and half am lugged up, and the nimble guides give the climber no rest if he wishes to pause a moment for breath, or to wipe the sweat from his forehead. At the

[1] The measurements of the height of the spire of old St. Paul's from the ground differ. Stowe makes it 520 feet; Camden, 534: this discrepancy may arise from the measurement having been made from or to different points. The towers of the cathedral of Cologne are 510 feet, and so, higher than the great pyramid.

[2] The weight of the three great pyramids has been estimated at 12,659,460 tons; about twenty-three square feet thickness of skin and thirty feet of height have been lost in 5,000 years.

same time they never cease shouting all the way and clamouring for bakscheesh, and are altogether as pertinaciously annoying as if they wished us to forget the gratitude we owe them for their assistance.[1]

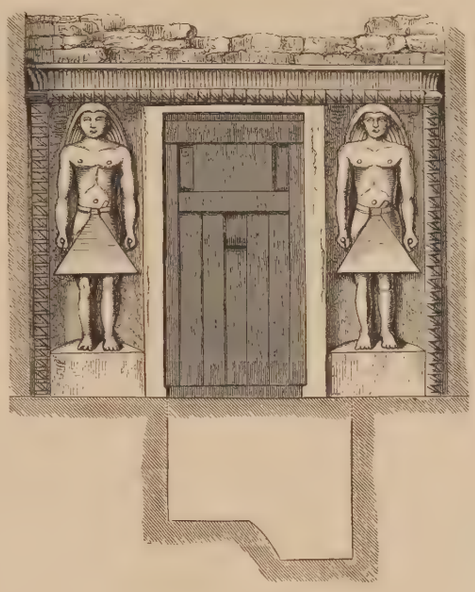
At last we have reached the goal. The point of the pyramid has long since crumbled away, and we find ourselves on a tolerably spacious platform. When our gasping lungs and throbbing pulses have a little subsided, and we have paid and got rid of the "Bedaween," who torment us to exchange our money and to buy sham antiquities, we look down on the vast space before us, and the longer we

SECOND AND THIRD PYRAMIDS.

gaze and let this glorious landscape penetrate our soul the more full of meaning and the more unique it seems to us. Fertility and dearth, life and death lie nowhere in such close and intimate juxtaposition as here. Out there to the east flows the stately Nile, white lateen-sails fluttering across it; and fields and meadows, gardens and groves spread along its shores like a carpet of emerald verdure. The villages that nestle under the shade of the trees look like birds' nests among green foliage, and at the foot of the mountain of Mokattam—which at this hour is bathed in golden light, and presently, when the sun is setting, will reflect the rosy and violet glow of evening—rise the thousand mosques of the city of the Khalifs dominated by the citadel, and by those slenderest of minarets

[1] Abd-al Lateef describes the difficulty of the ascent in his time, except to persons accustomed to mount by small holes cut in the casing.

which grace the mausoleum of Mohammed Ali and are visible from the remotest distance—an unmistakable feature of Cairo. Gardens and trees encircle the city as a garland round some fair head; there is nowhere a lovelier picture of prosperity, fertility, and life. The silver veins of the canals pervade the whole luxuriant scene and look like some shining, vital fluid. The sky is unclouded, and yet light shadows sweep across the fields; these are flocks of birds which here find abundance of food and drink. How lavish is the goodness of God! How fair and wealthy is the earth!



DOOR OF A TOMB AT GHIZEH.

The Bedaween have left us; we are alone on the summit. All is still, not a sound reaches us from far or near. Turning now to the west the eye can see nothing but pyramids and tombs and cliffs and sand. Not a blade, not a shrub can find nutriment on this sterile soil. Yellow-grey and dull brown are the only hues to be seen, in unbroken monotony far and wide.

Only here and there a white object shines among the dust; that is the dried skeleton of some dead animal. Silent and void, the foe to every thing that has life—the desert stretches before us; and where is its end? For days, weeks, months the traveller would never reach it, even if he escaped alive from the choking, overwhelming sand. Here, indeed, if anywhere, Death is king without dispute; here, where the Egyptians saw the sun vanish every day, here, behind the mountain rampart of the Libyan desert, began a world which, compared to the blooming domain of the East, was like a corpse compared to the eager stirring living man. There is no more silent burial-ground on earth than this desert; and so tomb after tomb was arrayed here, and, as if to keep more closely the secret of the grave, the waste flung its shroud of sand over the tombs of the dead. Here loom the terrors of infinitude. Here, at the very gate of the other world where eternity begins, the work of men's hands seems to have evaded the common lot of earthly things and to have won some share of immortality.

SCRIBE. (*In the Louvre.*)

"Time mocks all things, but the Pyramids mock Time," says an oft-repeated Arab proverb. We turn from the western landscape and look round at the circle of these monuments which are close to the Pyramid of Cheops. They all stand on the rocky foundation of the sand-drifted desert-plateau. Though, no doubt, some deeper motive lay at the root of the choice of this situation, it was partly determined by a consideration which a nation of husbandmen, such as the Egyptians

were, could never have lost sight of: the bodies must be safe from the Nile floods, and at the same time no portion of the fertile land must be subtracted from the requirements of the living. This idea is expressed indeed in a Greek inscription which Arrian, the disciple of Epictetus, had engraved on the Great Sphinx, and which begins thus (Dr. Young's translation) :—

> "Thy form stupendous here the gods have placed,
> Sparing each spot of harvest-bearing land."

In the whole of the Nile valley not one ancient grave has been found which could be reached by the inundation of the river.

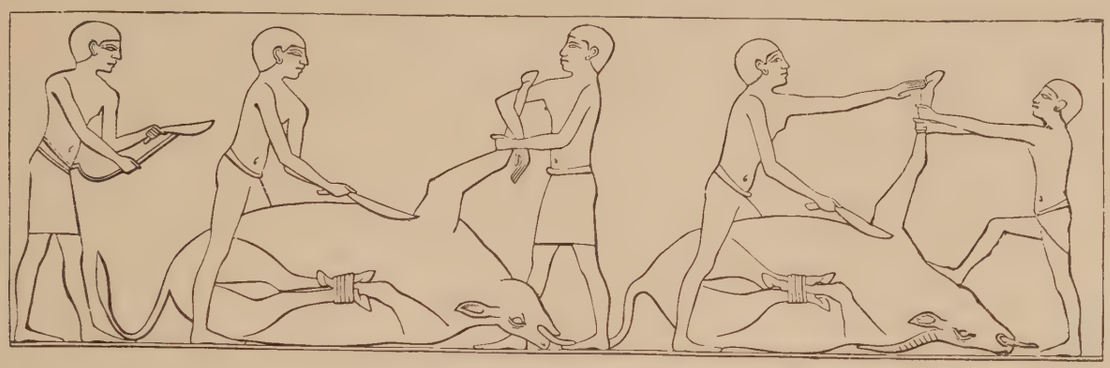
Looking south-west we see in the immediate neighbourhood a pyramid which in point of size yields little to that of Cheops; the casing layer of smooth stone at the top is still well preserved, and its builder was King Chefren—named Khafra in the inscriptions—the second successor to Cheops, who would seem also to have completed the Great Sphinx, which is somewhat farther to the east. The third pyramid, which is considerably smaller, but built with great care and of fine materials, served as a mausoleum for Mycerinus (Men-ka-ra), one of the same race of kings. The smaller pyramids, lying east of us and close under our feet, and south of the structure of Mycerinus, cover the mortal remains of the sons and daughters of the same Pharaohs who caused the larger monuments to be erected. East again of these three pyramids we can detect the ruins of the temple of Isis, where sacrifices were offered to the manes of the departed kings. Isis, the maternal, took the divine part of the dead into her bosom and restored it to life as the child Horus, who grew up to be Osiris. This departed soul did not, as we say, return to God; but, if it were found pure and faithful, became absolutely one with the universal soul whence it was derived, and received the same name, Osiris.[1] Thus the honours paid to the celestials could be offered to the souls of the Pharaohs that had passed through that apotheosis, and as long as Egypt was governed by independent sovereigns, there were prophets or priests of the Osirian or deceased Cheops (Khufu), and of the other principal pyramid-builders, who conducted the worship in the fallen temple of Isis, and who usually belonged to the oldest families of Memphis.

From this it appears that Herodotus was falsely informed when he tells us that Cheops and Chefren were both wicked contemners of the gods, who closed the temples and drew down on themselves the hatred of their subjects, so that no Egyptian would mention their names for detestation.

We may now descend, not wholly without difficulties it is true, and we will visit the best preserved of the tombs which stand up from the sand-drifts in regular rows, or contemplate the caves in the rock which open in from the face of the limestone plateau on which the Pyramids stand; thus we shall get an idea of the times of Chefren and his successor which will rescue them completely and for all time from the ignominious and odious character given them by Herodotus. While the Pyramids themselves bear no inscriptions, the inner chambers of all the tombs of the great of that early period are completely covered with pictures and hieroglyphics. The latter

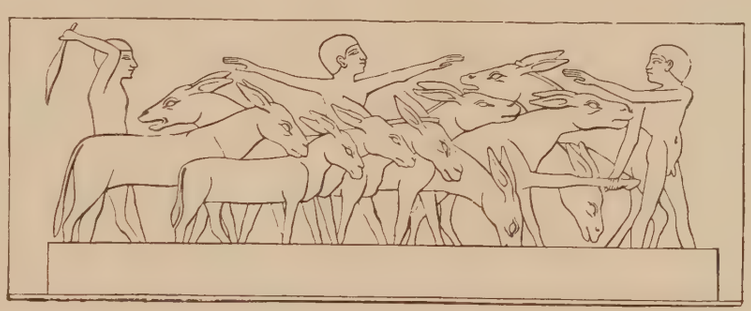
[1] The name of Mycerinus is found to be preceded by that of Osiris; but not those of his two predecessors.

refer to the relations in which the deceased stood to the Prince, to his titles and dignities, and to his possessions on earth. Only a few—as, for instance, that of the

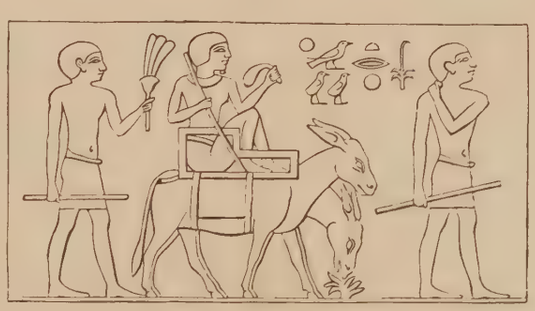


SLAUGHTER OF VICTIMS.

general officer Una[1]—narrate any warlike achievements. The epoch of the Pyramids was a time of peaceful prosperity. The whole life of the citizens of those days is set before our eyes by these representations. The wall of every tomb is a stone page of the most ancient of picture-books, and marvellously preserved by the sand which covered it. And if we ask whether, indeed, at so early a date the mechanical appliances of masons and sculptors were equal to giving worthy artistic expression to the manifold types of life, a simple "Yes" is hardly answer enough; for, in fact, the sculptors of the Nile at no time created more perfect pictures than at that early period, divided from ours by the lapse of five thousand years. The figures and features of the kings, the nobles, and the officials were reproduced with realistic accuracy and absolute fidelity, and any one who has had the opportunity of admiring the statue of the scribe found in the Necropolis of Memphis, and now in Paris, cannot doubt that he has seen a perfect portrait of the keen-looking man that it represents. The various compositions which cover the walls of the tombs deserve less praise; but the hand must have been well skilled that could chisel in limestone, and with indifferent tools, all these



A HERD OF ASSES.



THE NOBLEMAN URKHU INSPECTING HIS FIELDS.

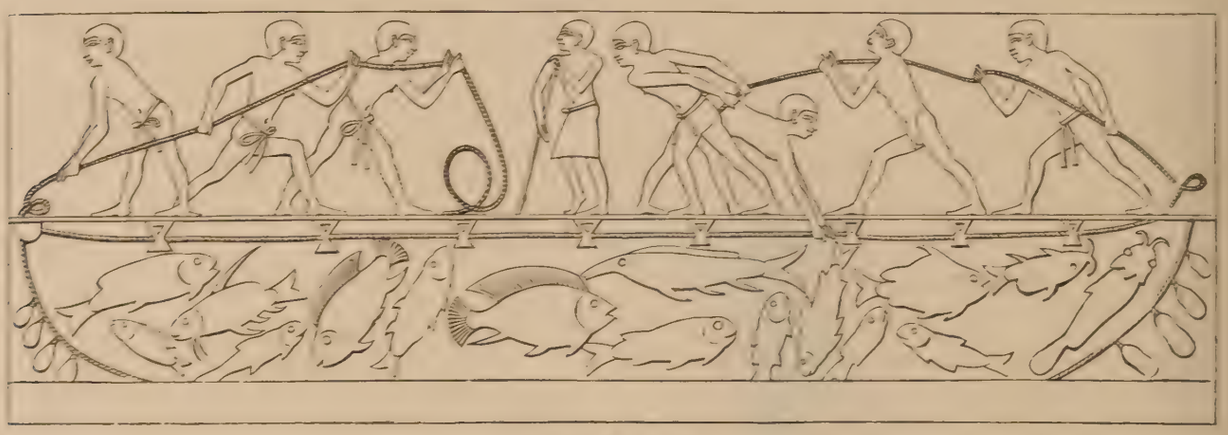
[1] This has been translated more than once; there is an English version in the "Records of the Past," Vol. II. p. 3.

characteristic forms with so clean an outline and such slight relief—often not more than a few lines in depth.

Nor is it only the art of the Egyptians that we find again in these tombs;

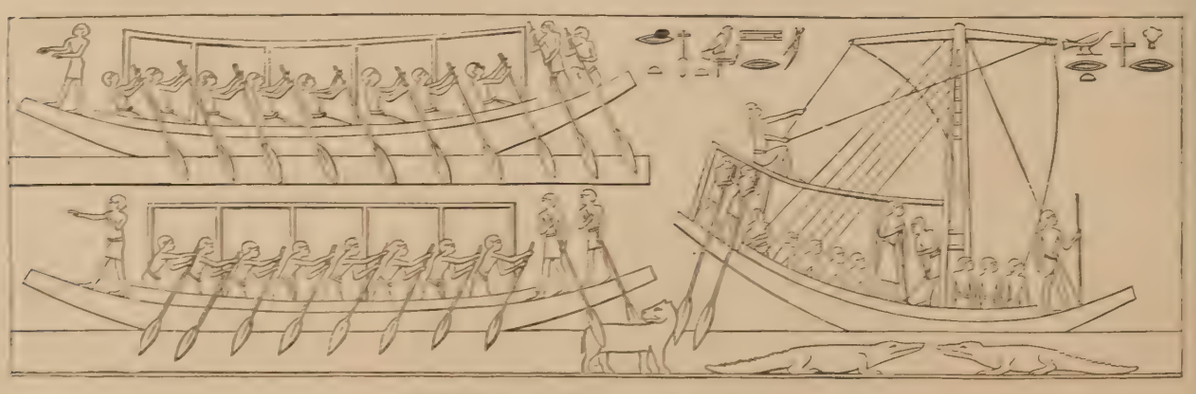
BONDMEN FELLING TREES.

all their culture and arts of life stand before us complete and fully represented. The type of writing is precisely the same as it continued to be at the time of



FISHING WITH NET.

the Romans; the scribe's implements represented thus and the papyrus roll are already in use as hieroglyphic symbols. We find from later writings that the most important scientific and religious works were written at this period.



CROCODILES AND HIPPOPOTAMUS IN THE NILE.

The great sempiternal calendar of the starry skies was already understood and used, and a highly elaborated theology was expounded to the people by a learned and well-organised priesthood. Every stone of the Pyramids was carefully measured, and the exactitude with which the four sides of the structures face the four points of the compass, proves that the architect—who could hardly have been acquainted with the use of the magnetic needle—worked hand in hand with the astronomer. The whole land was measured and distributed into districts under officers in charge of them. Every division had its governor, and above them all stood Pharaoh, not merely as unlimited ruler by the grace of God, but as the representative of the immortals, as the son and human incarnation of the sun-god Ra. A magnificent court surrounded the king, who was usually spoken of by the title of "The Great Gate" (in Egyptian, Per-aa; Hebrew, Pharaoh). Privy councillors, chamberlains, lords-treasurers, intendants of war material, of the women's house, of the labourers, of the granaries, of the minstrels, nay, even of the wardrobe and the bath, are mentioned. The governors of the districts and other officials near to the sovereign's person took the hereditary rank of Erpa-ha,[1] or "Prince of the realm," and if they were related to the family of the Pharaoh they had the title of Suten-rekh, or "Royal relative."[2] The daughters of the King were married to distinguished or meritorious officials, and we know that some of these attained to such an honour, notwithstanding an humble origin. Children of talent and merit, even of modest rank, were educated with the King's children, and we find even swimming-masters mentioned in an enumeration of the princes' tutors. Every Egyptian was forced to be satisfied with one lawful wife, and one queen only shared the throne during the Pharaoh's life-time and his tomb after death. A harem is, however, mentioned, where numerous women lived who were engaged in various offices about the royal pair, and which was inherited by each succeeding king. The passion for building which was predominant at this period—one of the strongest that ever takes possession of a powerful prince—strikes us everywhere in this Necropolis. It took deep root in Egypt, and was inherited by successive dynasties of Egyptian kings, and finally by many members of the family of the Ptolemies. An acute historian once observed that no more solid external symbol of a powerful government could be imagined than buildings of an important and permanent character. Moreover, the very act of building—rapidly urged forward by proportionate forces—is in itself an image or emblem of active rule, and in peaceful times is a substitute for it. The Pharaohs who piled up the Pyramids were passionately devoted to this illustrious taste, and we cannot be surprised that they should have given their architects a prominent position at court, and that among the tombs which we are now inspecting many of the finest are those of the master-architects under the Pharaohs.

Many of the graves here do not consist—like those dwellings of the dead which we shall meet with on our journey into Upper Egypt—of chambers hewn out in the rock, but of independent mausoleums which the Arabs call Mastaba. They are

[1] Erpa Ha or Repa Ha is "hereditary chief." The governors of nomes were hereditary nobles, like the King himself.

[2] One of the leading titles of the period; literally, King's acquaintance.

built of hewn stones; their ground-plan is usually quadrangular, and their walls slope inwards towards the top, so that the whole structure forms a truncated pyramid, rising not very high above the ground. Each Mastaba contains a principal chamber and a niche or cell, commonly walled up, called the Serdab, or "hollow space"; in this the statue of the deceased is frequently found. The "well"—*i.e.*, the shaft by which the body was deposited — commonly lay at the western end of the building.[1] The remains found in them prove that the arts of embalming were not so well understood at the early date when the Pyramids were built as at a later period. The door of the Mastaba generally opens to the east, while the entrance to the Pyramid is on the north side. On the stone door-posts, which were frequently decorated with the portrait of the deceased, a cylindrical hewn block generally rested, undoubtedly a copy of the trunk of a palm-tree such as the fellaheen use to this day to crown the door-way of their huts. Every wall on the inside of these peculiarly constructed monuments is covered with pictures such as we have described of the private life of the deceased. It was possible only for the rich and noble to have such permanent and costly sepulture, so that the pictures and the inscriptions explaining them always exhibit the owner as surrounded by manifold possessions, and in the midst of life. We seldom meet with any allusion to death and the other world; the mourners who assembled at the

GROUP OF EASTERN WOMEN.

[1] The bodies were lowered by a shaft or well into the sepulchral chamber. When so deposited the well was filled up with rubble.

THE TWO GREAT PYRAMIDS AT THE TIME OF THE INUNDATION.

Mastaba were not supposed to lament there, but to think of their father, brother, or master as still living in Osiris; as divine, and to be honoured with sacrifices, but not bewailed. The glorified spirit[1] valued the gifts that were brought to him from every village on his hereditary estate; bulls and gazelles were slain before him, and lists, engraved in tablets as a binding record, promise him on certain days of the year offerings of meat and bread, fowls and vegetables, cakes and milk, wine and essences. Prayers were addressed to him, and these children of a primitive age always preserved a cheerful memory of the man who, during his life-time, had been one of themselves; to whom they were bound by ties of love, friendship, gratitude, or servitude, and whose wealth and pleasures they had shared.

Every noble was a landowner. His wealth consisted not in money, which was at that time unknown, but in fields, meadows, papyrus-plantations on the shores of the streams, in serfs who exercised every variety of handicraft in his service, and in almost every kind of domestic animal that is known to us at the present day. Nay, some species which they had tamed, as antelopes and gazelles, have relapsed into the wild state. It is true that neither the horse nor the camel were known to them, and sheep seem to have been rare, but they sometimes occur. The possessions in herds of a noble of the time of the Pyramids were of very considerable extent. In the tomb of Khafra-ankh and his wife Herneka we read that they were owners of 835 oxen, 220 hornless cattle, 760 asses, 2,235 antelope-goats, and 740 common goats. The most enormous stock of beasts, however, belonged to a noble interred at Sakkarah, who possessed in all, including calves, 5,300 head of cattle. Swine also were often kept; fowls, and more particularly geese and doves,[2] were numbered by thousands. Pictures are never wanting in the tombs which represent the tilling of the fields, from the first ploughing with the hook-shaped plough to the gathering of the harvest. Overseers, stick in hand, everywhere superintended the labourers, who wore no garment but an apron; and the lord Urkhu himself is depicted as borne forth to inspect his fields on a litter supported between two asses.[3] A servant walks behind him shading him with a fan. We see the vine-dressers in full activity in the vineyards, and in the plantations we are shown the felling of the trees. It is hot, and the toilers refresh themselves with a draught from a flask; here the overseer is accompanied by his greyhound. The timber is required for constructing the Nile-boats which are used by the nobles, not only for purposes of business, but for taking their pleasure; for the upper classes delighted in catching fish and snaring birds, and in every description of sport by water. Besides, the reeds by the shore are over-crowded by the feathered tribes, the waters swarm with fish, and the hunter rarely sallies forth in vain when a crocodile or a hippopotamus is to be slain. And the man who fills an office at court, and whose serfs compose quite a little state by themselves, needs such recreation. His vassals perform every kind of handicraft—joiner's work, pottery, glass-blowing, weaving, paper-making, gold-

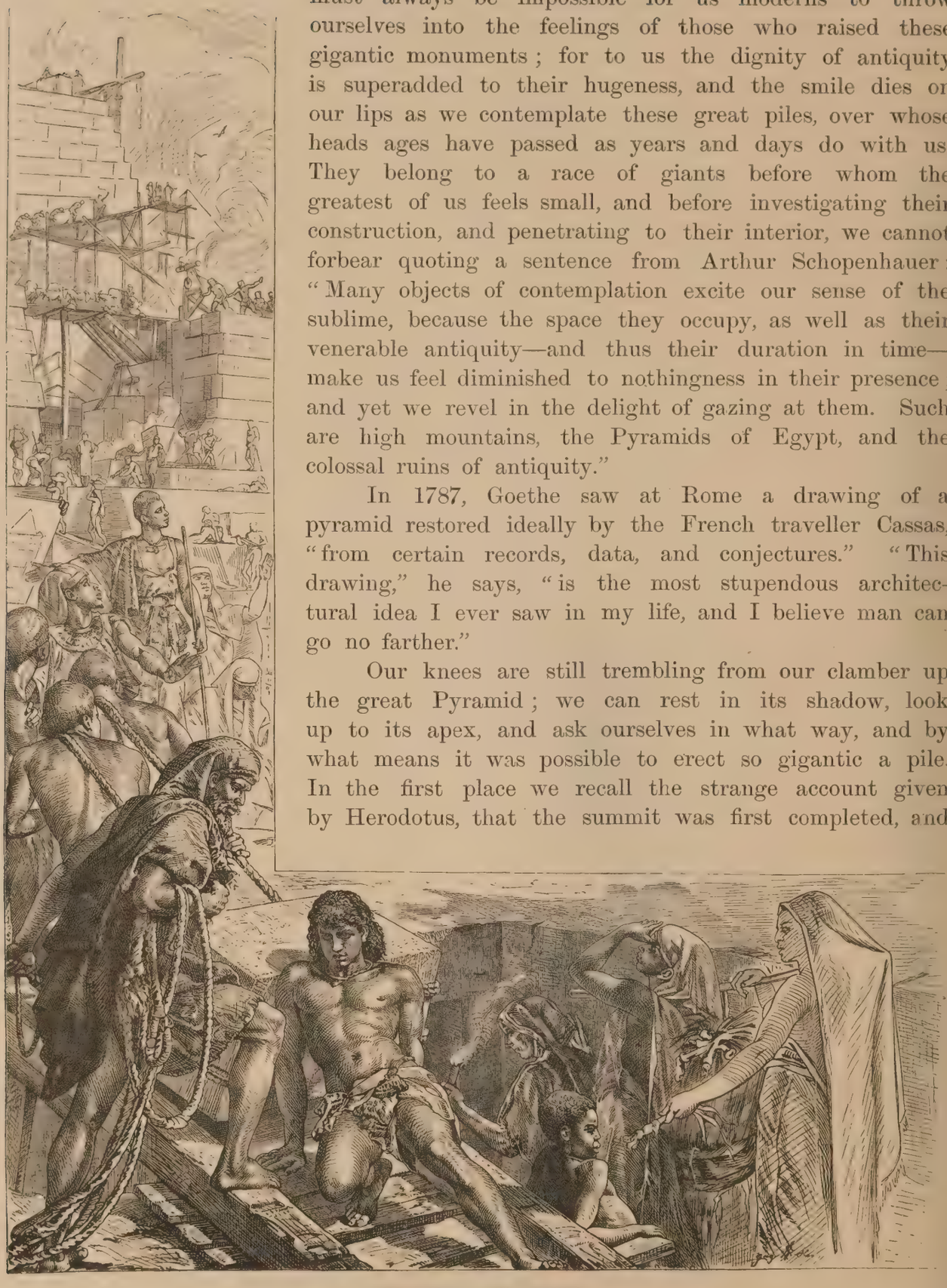
[1] This spirit, called Ga, was supposed to be attached to the statue. There was a hole in the Serdab through which the prayers and incense are supposed to have reached the statue usually walled up in it.

[2] The ring-dove, called Mena, often appears in the tombs; the pigeon, called Karenpe, in Coptic Shrompi, "the bird of heaven," also.

[3] The wheel not having been invented, cars and carriages were consequently not used.

washing, working in metals, and preparing the papyrus. The art of writing was industriously practised; the overseers were at the same time accountants; whole rows of scribes are busy in the writing-rooms. The simple gifts of nature do not satisfy the daily requirements of such a people; they bake, boil, and roast, and we find an extraordinary variety of cakes, each of which has its distinctive name. The ladies, who seem usually to have been of fair complexion—for they are represented with yellowish skins, while the men are reddish-coloured—stand on a perfect equality with their husbands, and were even then called "mistress of the house." When sons were lacking the daughters took the inheritance, and even the crown could devolve on the daughter of a Pharaoh. The children were named first after their mother and next after their father, and the inscriptions have in many cases preserved the pet name that commemorates the amiability of the wife. Family life is full of feeling and dignity, and light-heartedness and innocent delight find constant expression. Many of the encouraging words spoken by the overseers to the labourers, or by one serf to another, contain some jest, and some of the pictures even are intentionally humourous. No epoch of Egyptian history offers a more pleasing aspect than this; and though the Pyramids have been called "tokens of the slavery of whole races of men," and many a curse has been pronounced since the days of Herodotus on the heartless tyrants who raised them, it seems to us that these Jeremiahs have caused themselves unnecessary regret; for it was not an enfeebled race of captives who built the Pyramids, groaning under the lash as they toiled, but a youthful and vigorous nation who, during long centuries of peaceful inactivity, spent their superfluous energy in joyful labour to accomplish an almost superhuman task, under the very eyes of princes whom they reverenced as divine. All ulterior considerations were overlooked, for it was their delight in the newly found methods and means of overcoming mechanical difficulties which incited the first pyramid-builders and their successors to attempt the solution of the severest problems. Just as nature in the early days of her development produced the Ichthyosaurus, as the cyclopean walls of Greece were the precursors of the harmonious forms of her temples, as in the lives of individuals the period of wise moderation follows one of bolder enterprise—so in Egypt first arose those mightiest of all monuments of human labour, the Pyramids. Beyond a doubt, the lower orders must have suffered much oppression in the course of their erection, and yet we can hardly be mistaken in supposing that the contemporaries of Cheops who helped in completing his great work were proud of their co-operation; for every prince who undertakes a work which promises to give evidence to succeeding generations of the strength and ability of his age is secure of the approbation and support of his people. The nobles of those days did not neglect to record for the information of posterity what connection they had had with the building of their sovereign's Pyramid; nor must we forget that that sovereign was a god in the imagination of his subjects. After the completion of the monument erected in his honour, the people no doubt went home, like the Israelites after the dedication of Solomon's temple, "blessing the king, joyful, and of good courage."

There is hardly a traveller who has not fallen into a gloomy vein in describing the Pyramids, but without reason, as I have tried to prove, though certainly it



THE BUILDING OF THE PYRAMIDS.

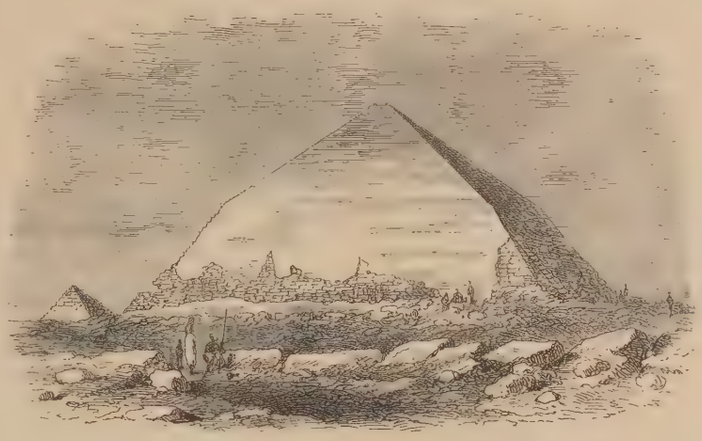
must always be impossible for us moderns to throw ourselves into the feelings of those who raised these gigantic monuments; for to us the dignity of antiquity is superadded to their hugeness, and the smile dies on our lips as we contemplate these great piles, over whose heads ages have passed as years and days do with us. They belong to a race of giants before whom the greatest of us feels small, and before investigating their construction, and penetrating to their interior, we cannot forbear quoting a sentence from Arthur Schopenhauer: "Many objects of contemplation excite our sense of the sublime, because the space they occupy, as well as their venerable antiquity—and thus their duration in time—make us feel diminished to nothingness in their presence; and yet we revel in the delight of gazing at them. Such are high mountains, the Pyramids of Egypt, and the colossal ruins of antiquity."

In 1787, Goethe saw at Rome a drawing of a pyramid restored ideally by the French traveller Cassas, "from certain records, data, and conjectures." "This drawing," he says, "is the most stupendous architectural idea I ever saw in my life, and I believe man can go no farther."

Our knees are still trembling from our clamber up the great Pyramid; we can rest in its shadow, look up to its apex, and ask ourselves in what way, and by what means it was possible to erect so gigantic a pile. In the first place we recall the strange account given by Herodotus, that the summit was first completed, and

the portion next the soil finished last. This has proved to be as well founded as his other assertion, of which the accuracy is forcibly impressed on every beholder, that the pyramid of Cheops was built up "in steps."

Though the English travellers Perring and Vyse deserve the credit of having first measured the Pyramids exactly in all their dimensions, it is to the Germans Lepsius[1] and Erbkam that the honour is due of having discovered, by painstaking investigations and most ingenious calculations, the method on which they were constructed. Any one who is acquainted with their great work will perfectly understand the account given by Herodotus, and be supplied with the answer to all the questions which force themselves on the mind of every thinking man who beholds the pyramids. We know now how it came to pass that one king raised a monument to himself of such gigantic size while another was content with a much smaller one; why we can point to only one uncompleted pyramid; and how it was that Cheops was bold enough to undertake a work for which the average duration of a reign was a wholly inadequate time,[2] and whose completion by a successor was not to be hoped for, since he, in his turn, would have to devote himself to building his own tomb.



PYRAMID OF DASHOOR.

As soon as a Pharaoh mounted the throne, he began the construction of his mausoleum, at first of modest dimensions, by building a truncated pyramid with steep walls. If death overtook him, his nucleus had the apex added to it at once, and the sloping sides of the pyramid were prolonged to reach the ground; but if time and means were not wanting, after this core or nucleus was completed an outer casing consisting of a series of steps was put on the truncated pyramid, and this process was repeated till at last a stage was reached when the mere addition of a layer was a gigantic undertaking. When it was necessary to finish off the pyramid the point was first completed, and then the steps were filled in from the apex downwards. The shape of the broken pyramid of Dashoor is highly instructive, for this one had its summit duly finished, but the unfilial successor neglected to complete the lower portion. Thus the pyramids were actually finished from the top downwards, but no stones that could easily fall out were used in filling in the steps,

[1] Lepsius, "Ueber den Bau der Pyramiden," 8vo, Cairo, 1843, first pointed out the mode of construction. The ground-plan was first laid out, and the place for the sepulchral chamber planned; then the passage for the sarcophagus, descending at an angle, had its mouth beyond the ground-plan of the mass of masonry. If the King's life was very long the masonry had to be carried beyond the orifice of the descending shaft or passage, as in the case of the great pyramid, necessitating a change of construction.—Gliddon, "Otia Aegyptiaca."

[2] There is reason to believe, from the Papyrus of Turin, that the life of Cheops extended or was supposed to extend to above ninety years, as pointed out by Hincks.

but blocks of this form which lay on each other with a broad surface, and in the course of time were as intimately joined by the mere pressure of their weight as if they had been cemented with the finest mortar. It is evident that the encasing of the pyramids with smooth slabs of stone such as still remain in those of Chefren and Mycerinus must have been begun at the top.

We know now that the size of the pyramid grew in proportion to the length of the life of its builder, and that it was at any time possible to bring it to completion. The filling in of the steps would be left to the filial piety of the heir, though in the earliest times it does not even seem to have been regarded as essential, as is shown by the pyramid of Meydoom and the step-shaped pyramid of Sakkarah.[1] "If in the

QUARRIES OF TOURAH.

course of ages the other determining proportions had remained equal, we might at this day count the years of each king's reign by the number of layers on his pyramid, like the annual rings in a tree."

The neatness of the workmanship of each separate block is beyond all praise. Herodotus was able to state that they were derived from the quarries on the opposite shore of the Nile, brought across the river in boats, and then conveyed by a causeway, which was itself the result of ten years' labour, to the spot where the building was proceeding. Extensive remains of this raised way are still visible, and even if the Pyramids themselves had disappeared the stone quarries in the Mokattam range at Tourah and Masarah, to the south of Cairo, would tell us that here in former times a people had lived who, above all others, loved to build. The architects of the Pharaohs penetrated deep into the heart of the mountains, which consist of a fine-grained nummulitic limestone of the older tertiary formation, and thence brought

[1] There is some difficulty about determining the number of steps: they may be five or seven. These were brick pyramids.

out the flawless blocks which they required; and it will be easily understood that the passages, vaults, and halls they thus hollowed out correspond in size with the mass of the pyramids, for the whole of the materials applied to their construction, with the exception of the granite slabs that cover them, were hewn from these

WEIGHING STONES.

quarries. Tourah was called Toroua in old Egyptian; this sounded like Troja to the ears of the Greeks, and they called it so; and as they found the captives taken in the Asiatic wars labouring in these quarries, they unhesitatingly invented the story that these were the descendants of the people of Ilion, whom Menelaus left behind on the shores of the Nile when he visited Egypt with the recovered Helen.

At the present day a great deal of stone is procured in the neighbourhood of the ancient quarries for the buildings of Cairo; and although it is true that the

LAMENTATION OF A WIDOW OF MEMPHIS AT THE COFFIN OF HER HUSBAND.

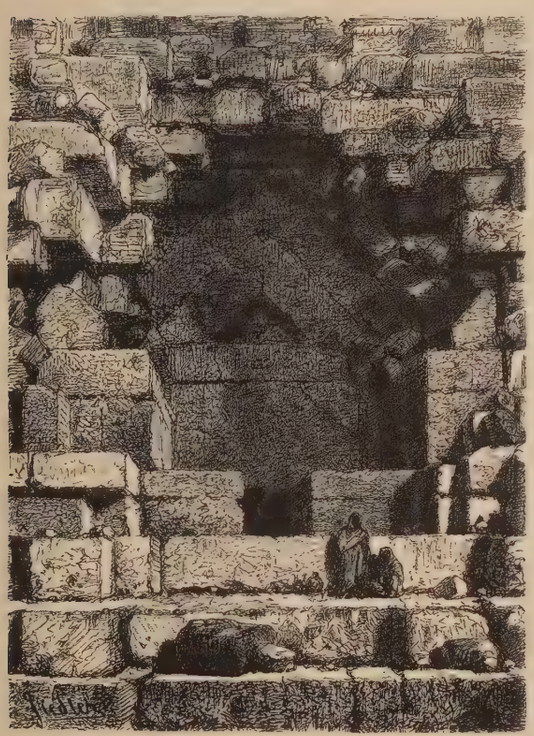
RUINS OF CHEFREN.

blocks and slabs no longer reach their destination dragged by a troop of men harnessed to the sledges, which run upon rollers, but are conveyed by horses or steam-engines over an iron tramway, there is still much in the scene that reminds us of ancient times, as well as in the form of the scales on which the blocks are weighed.

FOSSIL LIMESTONE WITH SHELLS FROM MOKATTAM.

Among the blocks from Mokattam which are built into the pyramids, many occur that are full of countless nummulites.

A hundred thousand men, who were relieved every three months, are said to have been employed for twenty, or perhaps thirty, years in building the Pyramid of Cheops, and the dragoman of Herodotus interpreted to him the inscription which stated that for the minor articles of food for the workmen—as radishes, onions, and garlic—one thousand six hundred talents (or about £360,000) had been expended. "If this was so," exclaimed the Halicarnassian, "how much must not other essential things have cost! such as tools of iron,[1] and the maintenance and clothing of the labourers." And we share the feelings of the Greek, for we see no reason to regard the numbers that were read to him as in any way exaggerated. However, the inscription of which he speaks was certainly not on the pyramid itself, which never bore any hieroglyphs or pictures, but in one or other of the neighbouring tombs.



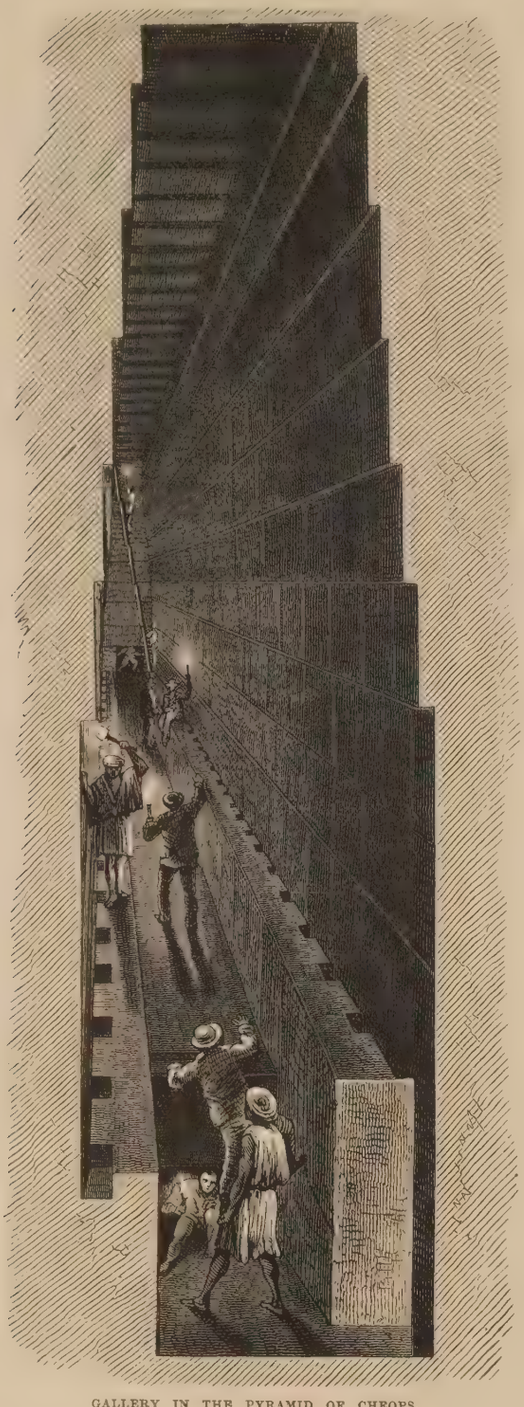
ENTRANCE TO THE PYRAMID OF CHEOPS.

But our escort is urging us to investigate the interior of the mausoleum of Cheops; the passages and chambers of the other pyramids cannot as yet be traversed without much preparation and some danger; besides, the different arrangement of the interior is of small interest, excepting to the archæologist. In all there is the same disproportion between the vast size of the building and the small dimensions of the utilised space that it contains, and yet this disproportion is intelligible and seems quite rational when we realise the fact that the architect's task was to construct for a corpse a resting-place as impenetrable and as secret as possible.

A visit to the interior of a pyramid is not altogether agreeable, for the farther we penetrate the more unpleasant are the heat and the peculiar smell of the bats which live there, particularly in the now impenetrable passages and chambers.

[1] Herodotus, ii., 9,126, for "the iron with which they were worked." Fragments of iron and copper have been found in the air channels by Perring and Dixon.

The "cool cellars" of our drinking songs are unknown in Egypt; a subterranean chamber preserves the average yearly temperature of the latitude, and this at Cairo is about 26° centigrade.[1]



GALLERY IN THE PYRAMID OF CHEOPS.

The entrance to a pyramid is always on the north side; in the mausoleum of Cheops it is on the level of the thirteenth step. We light the candles we have brought with us and walk on; straight on and upwards at first, till we come to a large block of granite which was fixed in the roof, and which closed the passage to the resting-place of the coffin. We pass round it, for the treasure-seekers who found their ingress arrested by it were unable to destroy it, and ruined the side wall in order to get a passage. Then we proceed upwards through a low close corridor, at the end of which a horizontal passage opens into the small "Queen's" chamber. Here we find a room which, though narrow, is more lofty, so that we can stand upright and take breath. The light of the torches and tapers is reflected from the polished surface of the Mokattam limestone. The separate blocks fit so accurately that the joints are hardly to be detected. The stone panels at the bottom of the wall are perfectly preserved, and the case is the same with the singularly placed stone beams of the roof. The parallel grooves cut in the floor and on the walls were to facilitate the transport of the sarcophagus. A few steps farther, through a horizontal passage—which enlarges in the middle into a sort of antechamber closed by four stone blocks or doors—and we find ourselves in the "King's" chamber, and in front of the despoiled granite sarcophagus of Cheops. This, the largest and most important chamber in the pyramid—its heart, as we may say—does not lie exactly in the centre, nor is it distinguished by great dimensions or by rich plastic decoration. Any good-sized room in our private houses may compare with it in size, for it is less than nineteen feet high; its length measures thirty-four feet and its breadth seventeen. Nine enormous slabs of granite form the roof and rest with their ends on the side walls. The enormous mass of masonry that is piled above them must have crushed

[1] About 70° Fahrenheit.

them in if the far-seeing architect had not provided against this by constructing over this chamber five others to diminish the pressure. The first of these chambers—which are *culs-de-sac*—was called Davison's room, after its discoverer, and the four others, of which the uppermost exhibits a triangular section, were found by Perring and Vyse, and were named by them, with utter want of taste, Wellington's, Nelson's, Lady Arbuthnot's, and Campbell's Chambers. The discovery of these hidden rooms — chambers of construction, as they are termed by architects — was of great importance from the circumstance that the name of Cheops occurs in them. The stone-workers had written it on the blocks with red paint even before they left the quarry, and the masons had built them into the wall in such a way that the inscriptions were turned upside down. This discovery certainly brought nothing new to light, but it confirmed what had long been known, for we had already learned from the Greeks the name of the king who was interred in the Great Pyramid. But so long as no inscription declared it in plain words, it was optional—and it had a certain fascination—to bring all sorts of profound speculations and mysterious calculations to bear on the wonderful erection of Cheops. Thus Jomard, and others after him, attempted with much acuteness to bring forward evidence that this structure, with its measurements and proportions, its accurate relation to the points of the compass, its opening directly in the eye, so to speak, of the Polar star,[1] and so forth, had served a scientific end. The careful "orientation" of the pyramid bore witness to its astronomical purpose; from its dimensions it was concluded that it was to be regarded as a metrical monument, as the indestructible witness to the standard of measurement that had prevailed in ancient Egypt, or as an astronomical and chronological memorial.[2] But all these suggestions, in spite of the acumen with which they were argued, have failed of acceptance, because, as we have seen, it was quite impossible, when a pyramid was planned, to estimate its ultimate size with any accuracy.

How many ideas have been thrown out as to the end and purpose of the pyramids! According to the ancient Arab legends, they were erected before Noah's flood in order that the treasures of science of doomed humanity might be preserved from destruction. Early Christian travellers, who did not know the small dimensions of their inner chambers, thought that they were the granaries constructed by Joseph; some regarded them as observatories and sundials, measuring the length of the day by their vast shadows; others as light-towers, beacons shining from afar to guide the wanderer in the desert; others, again, supposed that in their gloomy chambers the secret and appalling rites of initiation into the mysteries and the solemn dedication of priests were accomplished; nay, a certain Herr Kuhn,[3] in 1793, strove in perfect earnest to prove that they were not the work of men's hands, but a natural growth. Others, better informed, and cognisant of the true purpose of a pyramid—namely, to receive the sarcophagus of a king—endeavoured to find an ethical reason

[1] Sir J. Herschel's observations on the entrance passage in the Great Pyramid, and that the entrance faced the star, α Draconis, the old Pole-star, are given in Vyse's "Journal," Vol. II. p. 107.

[2] Culminating in the theory of Professor Piazzi Smyth, that the proportions amount to a revelation. See his work, "Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid."

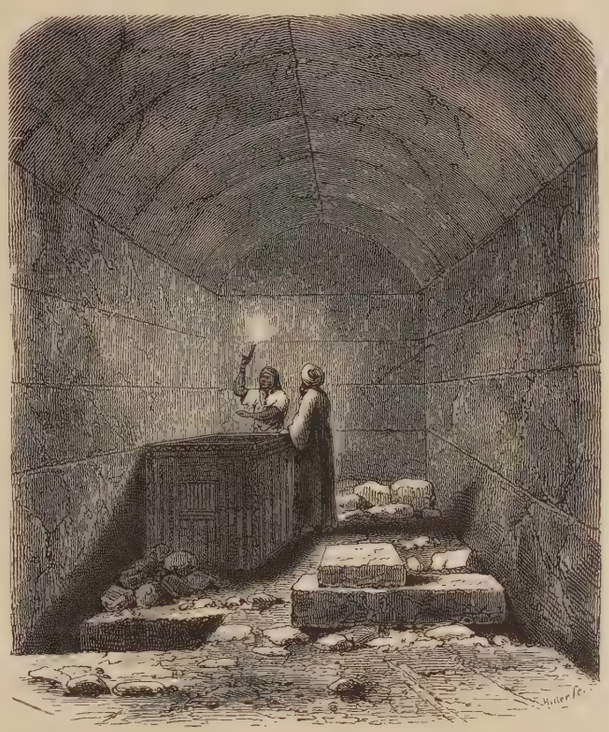
[3] T. Ch. Kuhn; his work was published at Lemgo.

for the choice of the pyramidal form for a tomb. By it all the fundamental ideas of Egyptian religion and philosophy were supposed to be symbolised to the outward sense. According to them it was to be regarded as the emblem of the spiritual world in its gradations from the broadest basis to the apex, and to be compared to the Platonic graduated edifice of ideas which culminated and found its apex in the very highest and uttermost cognisable idea. It was the presentment of the four elements which, when separated, pervade all matter and re-unite into one. These elements—earth, air, fire, and water—were said to be the fundamental constituents of the world and of all things. In the primary essence or godhead —Osiris—they existed together in perfect equality, and hence unity; at the creation contention, or mutual repulsion—Typhon—rent the godhead; but love, Isis, re-united the four elements—the *disjecta membra* of the godhead—forming out of them, by harmonious and judicious combinations and unions, the whole visible universe and all the creatures in it. And as in the beginning the world and all things in it came into being, so the processes of destruction and re-construction are constantly repeated. The combining of the four elements by Isis and their dissolution by Typhon, the convergence and divergence of the four sides of the pyramids, were supposed to symbolise the primitive formula of all cosmical life—the combining and severing of the four elements. These vague but ingenious speculations correspond to the well-attested doctrines of the Egyptian priesthood, and a symbolical meaning was attributed at least to the apex of the pyramid, for a pointed top belonged exclusively to the mausoleums of the kings, while the bodies of private individuals were deposited in truncated pyramids. This rule was without exception, and several paintings have been found in which the basal portion of the pyramid is black, and the upper part and point are red. We may regard it as quite certain that the indestructible buildings of which we are speaking were intended to insure the preservation, not only of the bodies of the princes which were deposited in them, but of their memory, and that they therefore belong to that class of monuments of which a great thinker said—"It is evident that they were in fact intended to appeal to the latest posterity, to hold communion with them as it were, and so maintain the unity of man's conscious life. Nor is it only in the buildings of the Hindoos, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, but in those also of a later period, that we can see the yearning to speak to distant generations; and therefore it is disgraceful to destroy or disfigure them, or to degrade them to base and utilitarian ends."

WOODEN COFFIN OF MEN-KA-RA.

The Pyramids have not been spared by impious hands, and their interior chambers —where we still are lingering—had, at any rate at the time of the Romans, been opened by avaricious Prefects. Under the Arab dominion the rulers themselves undertook this task, by no means a light one; finding nothing but empty sarcophagi and bodies, they endeavoured to justify themselves in the eyes of their subjects for the sums they had squandered, and spread the false intelligence that they had found

exactly as much gold as the work of opening the tombs had cost. When the labourers under Mamoon (died A.D. 813), the son of Haroun el Rasheed, who is so well known to every reader of the "Arabian Nights," had penetrated to the heart of the Pyramid of Cheops, it is said that they found a treasure, and also a marble tablet on which were these words:—"Such a King, son of such a King, in such year will open this pyramid and spend a certain sum of money in so doing. We here repay him for his undertaking; but if he persists in his enterprise, he will sacrifice much money and gain nothing." In fact, searching the Pyramids has enriched no one, and though we hear romantic tales of things said to have been found there, yet, on the whole, ransacking a pyramid has been generally regarded as a crime to be followed by retribution, or even by death.[1]



SEPULCHRAL CHAMBER OF MEN-KA-RÀ.

The daring and indefatigable English, who some forty years since explored the Pyramids at a great cost, found in them neither gold nor silver, but many treasures of high scientific value. Their labours were best rewarded in the pyramid third in size, which is called by the Arabs "the coloured or red pyramid," from its casing of granite, and which far exceeds those of Cheops and Chefren in the perfection of its structure and execution. In it they found not only highly remarkable inner chambers, and a beautiful sarcophagus of brownish basalt or whinstone veined with blue, but also the lower part of the wooden mummy-shaped chest or coffin in which the king's body had lain, and on it an inscription which proves that Herodotus was well informed when he named King Mycerinus—in Egyptian, Men-ka-ra—as the builder of this third pyramid. The noble basalt sarcophagus sank off the coast of Spain with the ship which was to transport it to England; the inscription on the wooden chest, which is preserved in the British Museum, offers no difficulties to the translator. It has been thus rendered into English by Dr. S. Birch:—"Thou that art become Osiris, ruler of the North and South country,[2] King Men-ka-ra, living for ever, born of Nut the goddess of heaven, and begotten of Seb the god of earth—may the wings of thy mother Nut spread over thee to shelter thee, in whose name is hidden the secret of heaven. May she grant thee to be as a god, striking to earth all who oppose thee. King of the North and South. Men-ka-ra living for ever."

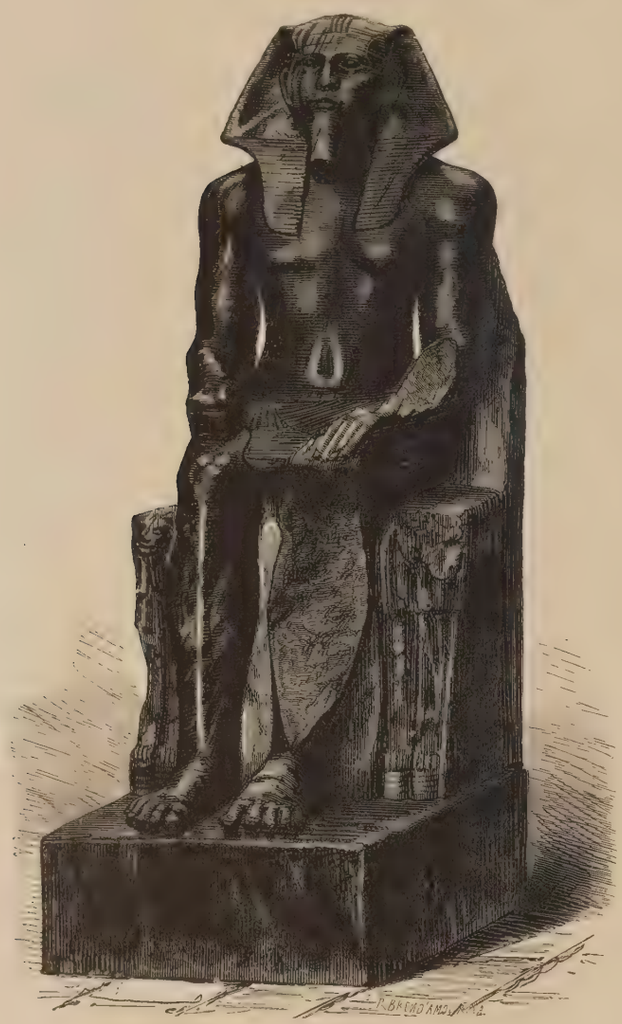
Remains were even found of this king's skeleton, and of the materials in which

[1] Fragments of a stone with a Cufic inscription, probably relating to the attempt to open, have lately been found near the pyramid.

[2] Or upper and lower hemisphere.

his body, embalmed with resins, had been wrapped.[1] The winding-sheet consisted of wool,[2] while the bandages of the mummies of a later period were usually made of linen. The burial-chamber of Men-ka-ra is finer than any other room found in the Pyramids; it consists entirely of granite, and the ceiling is formed of blocks resting against each other in the middle, and hewn into a pointed arch resembling that known as early English. Thus the room has the aspect of a vaulted chamber.

The other rooms, and several passages closed with slabs in this pyramid, show that another body besides that of Men-ka-ra was interred here at a later period, and history and legend agree in saying that it was that of a woman. Queen Nitocris, of the VIth dynasty, seems to have taken possession of this mausoleum, which was built long before her time, and her fair hair and rosy complexion, which were long remembered, led to her being confounded with the famous Greek beauty, Rhodopis—*i.e.*, the rosy-faced—who is said to have been the wife of Sappho's brother, and the favourite of the Pharaohs. At the time of Herodotus it was already currently reported that it was she who lay interred in the third pyramid; at a later date the memory of the fair Rhodopis took new aspects, and she became a sort of Loreley in Arab legends. On the western pyramid, they tell us, a fair and wanton woman sits with brilliant teeth, who drives the traveller mad that lets himself be caught in her toils. Thomas Moore has repeated this legend:—



STATUE OF CHEFREN.

"Fair Rhodope, as story tells,
The bright, unearthly nymph who dwells
'Mid sunless gold and jewels hid,
The Lady of the Pyramid."—*The Epicurean*, chap. vi.

The Bedaween have other tales of spirits that haunt the Pyramids; one wears the form of a boy, and a second that of a man, who stride round these mausoleums after sunset, burning incense.[3] No Arab child ventures near them at night, and least of all near the Pyramid of Men-ka-ra. And yet all that history and legend tell of

[1] These are now in the British Museum, but the condition of the remains and the anchylosed condition of one knee have cast a doubt on the subject, as it has been considered the body could not have been mummied in a symmetrical form and placed in the inner wooden coffin found with it.

[2] The wraps of the bodies of the workmen found in the Tourah quarries were also of wool, like those found with the body in the third pyramid.

[3] Described by the Arabic author Masoudi, and translated in Vyse's "Journal," Vol. II. p. 327.

this king is in his favour; he is lauded as the friend of the gods, who re-opened the temples and led the people back to worship and sacrifice. He is called the most just and venerated of all kings, and he must have been a "merry monarch" too, if any germ of truth lies at the bottom of the legend which relates that, having been told that an oracle had prophesied that he should live but six years and die in the seventh, he caused the lamps to be lighted every day at sunset, and drank and rejoiced till the morning, and so gave the oracle the lie, since, by turning night into day, he made twelve years of the six allotted to him.

The legends associated with Rhodopis are no less pleasing and pretty. She, who was the Loreley witch of the Arabs, was also their Cinderella, for it is said that an eagle—or, according to another authority, the wind—carried away her sandal while she was bathing, bore it to Memphis, and there dropped it into the lap of the king as he sat in judgment. He, amazed at the elegance of the sandal and the strangeness of the incident, immediately sent forth messengers to seek its owner. She was found at Naucratis and brought to the king, who made her his wife and, when she died, caused the third pyramid to be erected for her.[1]

Thus, as flowers grow on a grave, so sweet myths have sprung up round these solemn tombs.

THE SPHINX CLEARED FROM THE SAND.

We will now quit this hot, dark, and dusty inner chamber, and make our way to the second pyramid, which is easily distinguished by the polished casing-stones which to this day cover its upper portion and are in good preservation.

It was erected by Chefren—called by the Egyptians Khafra—the next but one in succession to Cheops. Its interior offers nothing remarkable; but to the south-east of it stands a stone building, in which, as it would appear, the faithful assembled to honour his manes with pious exercises. It was Mariette Pacha who brought this interesting structure to light, after it had been for a thousand years buried in

[1] This legend is delightfully told in Vol. III. of William Morris's "Earthly Paradise."

sand; and at the same time he obtained certain evidence as to the name of its founder, for in a tank which contained water, but which is now choked with sand, he discovered seven statues which all represented King Chefren, the builder of the second pyramid. The name of this sovereign may be read on most of them, and the

MODERN SPHINX-LIKE FACE.

finest and best preserved has found a well-deserved place of honour in the museum at Boolak. It is wrought in a diorite[1] so hard that Mr. Drake—with whom I some years since stood admiring it—assured me that he should hesitate to try his chisel on such a material; it is nevertheless highly finished in every part, and the realistic treatment of the grave and gracious features is worthy of all praise. The beautiful

[1] A hard variety of greenstone, of volcanic origin.

polish of the diorite need not surprise us when we look round at the building in which these statues were found. It consists of blocks of granite and alabaster, and the masons who hewed and polished these with the utmost care were skilled in every branch which we could regard as belonging to their calling. The arrangement of this building is very simple; but it is interesting as the only example of a temple-like edifice that has come down to us from those very early days. The rectangle everywhere predominates, the pillars have not as yet developed into columns, and on the walls there are no inscriptions to tell us the purpose to which this building was devoted. The two larger chambers form together a T, and the side rooms have coffer-shaped niches of granite and alabaster. Many of the huge slabs which roofed the nave—if I may be allowed the expression—still remain supported on the granite pillars. How was the cultus performed which these chambers hid from the eyes of the multitude? May we infer from the statues of the dog-headed ape[1] found in the sand that the god Thoth, to whom this animal was sacred, was honoured here above all others? Were the statues of Chefren hurled into the pool by heathen rebels, or were they not overthrown till a Christian edict devoted all the images of the gods to destruction? Or is this the temple of the Sphinx spoken of in a primeval inscription?

Questions like these crowd upon the mind of the visitor; and if he raises his eyes towards the north-east, he sees in his immediate neighbourhood the gigantic form of the most mysterious of all mysterious images—the great Egyptian Sphinx, the watcher of the desert, called by the Arabs Aboo 'l hawl, "the father of terrors." Its huge mass was covered with desert-sand again and again, in ancient times as well as in our own days; only the head, decorated with the royal coif, being left gazing fixedly eastwards.

During the present century, it is true, the Sphinx has been compelled to reveal its lion-body, and stand confessed to daylight and curiosity; and it has been ascertained that it is hewn out of the living rock, and where the stone has not lent itself to the form of the lion-body it has been supplemented with masonry. This figure, at the present day, measures nearly sixty-four feet from the crown of the head to the pavement on which the paws rest—and what a spectacle it must have offered when the servants of the Necropolis kept it free from sand, and it could be seen complete, with the stately flight of steps which led up to it!

Through many successive centuries worshippers innumerable mounted these steps to approach the altar, which stood on a finely inlaid pavement between the legs of the giant—for the Sphinx was the image of a mighty god. The Greeks heard him called Harmachis—in Egyptian, Har-em-khu—and this signified "Horus on the horizon," or "the sun at its rising." Harmachis is the young light which conquers the darkness; the soul triumphing over death; fertility expelling dearth; and he, the conqueror of Typhon, vanquished the foe under many forms, among them under that of a Sphinx. Harmachis, in the Necropolis, promised resurrection to the dead; Harmachis, who is most active just in the morning hours, and whose face is fully illuminated by the rising sun, brings the world to a new day after the gloom of night;

[1] Or Cynocephalus, living animal sacred to the lunar deities Khonsu or Chons, and Tahuti or Thoth.

Harmachis, on the border of the fertile country, conquers the drought and keeps back the sand from engulfing the fields. Thus it comes that his image, the Sphinx, was called by the Egyptians at first Hu,[1] and afterwards Belhit, both signifying "a watcher"; and by the Greeks Agathodacmon, "the good spirit."

Each Pharaoh was regarded as a mortal incarnation of the sun-god; and therefore the kings were willing to select the form of a Sphinx as expressing allegorically the divine essence in their nature. The attribute of fiery and irresistible physical strength was represented by the body of the powerful and irascible lion; the highest intellectual power by the human head. The union of the two was happily chosen as the symbol of an omniscient and omnipotent object of worship.

The making of the Sphinx was begun under Cheops. It was finished by order of King Chefren, the builder of the second pyramid, and dedicated to Harmachis; this we learn from the large tablet covered with hieroglyphics and fixed in the breast,

HOUSE OF MARIETTE PACHA AT SAKKARAH.

which also informs us that this monument must have already needed to be freed from the sand under the kings of the XVIIIth dynasty, about B.C. 1500. King Thothmes IV., so runs the inscription, in the course of a lion and gazelle hunt in the first year of his reign, rested in this vicinity, and came to worship Harmachis—*i.e.*, the Sphinx. He slept in the shadow of the giant, and he dreamed that the god spoke to him with his own mouth, "as a father speaks to his son," and required of him that he should free his image from the drifts of sand. When he woke he took the divine warning to heart. In commemoration of this vision, and of the subsequent disinterment of the Sphinx, he caused this tablet to be erected, which to this day is but very little injured.

Other inscriptions, of much later date, record the resistance which it has been necessary to make to the encroachments of the sand—sometimes hardly perceptible, but sometimes, when the Khamseens blow, rising in hot storm-clouds of dust. Among

[1] The Sphinx was so called on the tablet describing the objects deposited in the pyramid; it was also named *Akar*, and, as a hieroglyph, used for *Neb*—"Lord." It seems to have been particularly honoured under the XVIIIth dynasty by the monarchs of that line, and often appears represented on monuments and scarabæi of the period. Generally it is male, but Mutnetem or Netemmut, the mother of the monarch Horus, is represented as a female Sphinx.

these inscriptions we find, in Greek, the remarkable verses by the historian Arrian; most of the others only tell of imperial visits to the Sphinx, and of works of restoration undertaken with reference to the pavement round the monument and the wall intended to ward off the sand. In later times not a hand was put out to preserve it from being overwhelmed; nay, in the last century the face of the "father of terrors" was used as a target for shooting at when the Mameluke artillery was practising—that face of which Abd-al Lateef writes, that "It bore the stamp of benignity and beauty, and was graced by an affable smile." When this travelled Arab was asked what was the most wonderful thing he had seen, he replied,

PYRAMID OF SAKKARAH.

"The exquisite proportions of the Sphinx's head." At the present day it has acquired a hideous negro aspect, chiefly from the loss of the nose.

Why is it that men are so ready to destroy the works of man? The hand of the destroyer has been put forth even against the Pyramids. Some sovereigns have thought they could utilise the well-hewn blocks; others have dreamed of sweeping them from the face of the earth, in fanatical fury against the works of the heathen. However, the attempt to blow them up with gunpowder, though contemplated more than once, was not carried into effect; but only in consequence of a warning that Cairo would be endangered by it.

The sand, the foe of every work of man erected here, has at the same time proved to be their friend, for nothing but what it has covered and protected has

come down to us uninjured, and this is the case with that part of the Necropolis of Memphis known as Sakkarah.

Let us turn from Ghizeh southwards; we will keep close to the border of the fertile land, leaving the fields of the dead of Zaweyet el'Aryan and the stately group of Pyramids of Abuseer on our left, and then—up by a little pool, round which the plovers are fluttering, and where wagtails alight to drink—we will climb the bare undulating hill-frontier of the desert. After a short walk on a sandy path, past boulders, choked-up tombs, whitened bones, and many a fragment of mummy cloths sticking out of the sand, we arrive in sight of the spacious verandah of a simple but hospitable-looking house. This is "Beth Mariette," as the Arabs call it—the head-quarters of the man who by his acumen, zeal, and energy has succeeded in wresting thousands and thousands of monuments, among them some of the highest importance, from the sand-drifts of the Necropolis of Sakkarah. The keepers of this hostelry, grey-bearded and friendly Arabs, provide us with couches and filtered water, and our breakfast tastes excellent in this shady spot after our ride through the desert.

SPHINX FROM THE SERAPEUM.

SPHINX FROM THE SERAPEUM.

One of the old guardians willingly guides us to the monuments we designate. One strikes the eye at once—the high pyramid of steps; but many others which we know by description are not to be discerned even with his help, for the unwearying sand that Mariette Pacha strove against has triumphed once more.

We could see the pyramid of steps from the ruins of Memphis; we will now proceed to the south-east and visit it. It consists of six stories, so to speak—the bottom one, which is the highest, measuring about thirty-seven feet. If we inspect this pyramid more closely, we shall perceive that it differs from its sisters in many respects. It is not set to the four points of the compass; its base is not a square, though rectangular; it has been surrounded by a wall, and its interior may be said to be altogether peculiar. The Prussian General von Minutoli explored and described it; of its four entrances one, contrary to all custom, faces southwards.[1] Two of the chambers are lined with green tiles set in stucco in a sort of mosaic, and the ceilings of the rooms are ornamented with stars.[2] The chambers and passages

[1] Besides Minutoli's description (*Reise*, 1844, p. 405) this pyramid has also been described by Segato (in his *Saggi Pittorici*, Firenze, 1827), who makes seven steps, which would correspond with the number of steps of the Babylonian pyramid; but in the present condition of the pyramid it is difficult to determine how many steps it may originally have had.

[2] Porcelain tiles from this pyramid are in the British Museum; some had a kind of ring or pierced place at the back to pass something—as a wire or cord—through, to hold them more securely. The details of it are given in Vyse's "Journal," Vol. III. p. 41. Two of the titles, if not for a prenomen of a king, are inserted on the door.

are completely choked with the remains of vessels in alabaster and marble, with fragments of sarcophagi and fallen pieces of the sculptured stones that covered the walls and roof. A thickly gilt skull, gilt sandals, and other interesting remains of antiquity found here by von Minutoli, with the model of a boat in which they were contained, have been carried to the mouth of the Elbe.

What one element spares another destroys, serving the ends of Time the Annihilator. Even this proud structure, on its foundation of eternal rock, is doomed to destruction. And yet it is certainly the oldest of all the artificial eminences far and near, and it has seen the lapse of more centuries than any other edifice raised by the hand of man.

The Pyramid of Kochome—*i.e.*, of the black bull—is said to have been built by the sovereigns of the first dynasty, and one part of the Necropolis of Sakkarah undoubtedly bore the same name. If Mariette Pacha is right, in the time of the early empire, before the dominion of the Hykshos, the most sacred portions of the Apis bulls were preserved and interred in the inner chambers of this pyramid. This would explain the choice of the name Kochome—in Egyptian, Ka-Kham—"the black bull." This is not the place to enquire minutely into the antiquity of a monument; but I may say that, though this pyramid of steps may have been built a little later than the mausoleums of Ghizeh, probabilities at any rate are in favour of its being considerably older. At every step we meet with something that we can neither recognise nor restore in our imagination.

The ancients have left us some information about the buildings on these sites. The Pyramids stood here, then as now. The Serapeum, as we shall presently see, has been discovered; and the name of Sakkarah, which is found under the form Sokari in the very oldest tombs, has not disappeared under the lapse of ages. But where are we to look for the sacred lake across which the mummy of the Apis was ferried in a bark? where on the western shores spread the broad meadows that were compared to the Homeric fields of Asphodel? where stood the sanctuary of the sombre Hecate, and the statue of Justice without a head? where the gates of Cocytus and Truth? where the numberless sacred and civic buildings spoken of by the Greek papyri?

SCARABÆUS BEETLE (*Ateuchus sacer*).

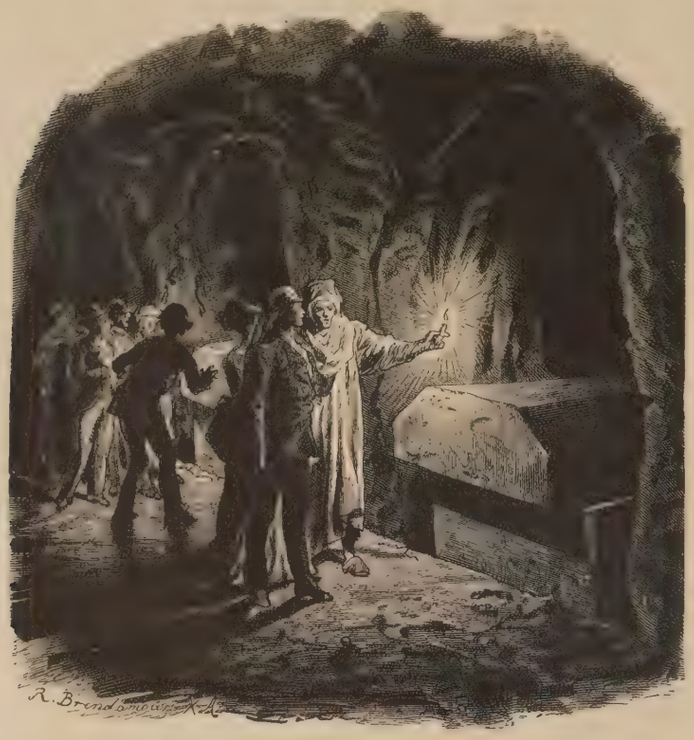
Here, among these tombs, in ancient times, thousands of living souls sought the mercy of God, peace of soul, and, at the same time, earthly advantage.

We will return to Mariette Pacha's house, and direct our attention to the most important of the indefatigable Frenchman's discoveries—namely, the Serapeum or temple of the god Serapis. The most magnificent of his temples has already been described in the chapter on Alexandria.

Here, at Sakkarah, the bulls Apis were buried from the remotest period; their name in Egyptian was Hapi, and after their death Osar-Hapi—*i.e.*, the Osiris Apis.[1] They were venerated as the incarnation of the soul of Osiris in the nether world,

[1] The name of Osiris prefixed to that of the Apis meant the Osirian or deceased Apis. The name of Osiris is found prefixed to that of Men-ka-ra or Mycerinus on his coffins, but not to those of deceased private persons before the XIXth dynasty, about B.C. 1300.

or, in other words, as the resuscitating principle restoring all that was dead to new life. The god who figured the wanderings of the soul until it was absorbed into the great universal essence was called Sakari. It was in his province that the temple of Osiris-Hapi was erected, and the Greek god Serapis arose from a modified conception of the nature of this divinity.



TOMB OF THE APIS.

Thus it happened that close to the Egyptian tombs of the Apis and his temple there also rose a Greek Serapeum.

When, in the year 1856, a number of Sphinxes were discovered in the neighbourhood of Mariette Pacha's house, that learned investigator was reminded of a passage in Strabo, in which that trustworthy geographer states that in the Necropolis of Memphis a Serapeum was erected in so sandy a spot that the Sphinxes were constantly being covered with sand, and the votaries visiting the temple were, when the wind was violent, in danger from the sand-storms. This keen archæologist was immediately possessed with the desire to ascertain whether, where Fernandez had found the Sphinxes, the remains of the Serapeum might not be discovered. He began to excavate there, and although he had ample supplies of labour at his command he needed all his energy to overcome the difficulties he encountered. The masses of sand had caked and hardened, and the sides of the passages so patiently excavated often fell in and choked the opening up again. At last the avenue of Sphinxes was found. He followed it up, and it was discovered that it had connected the Greek Serapeum with the Egyptian temple. He then opened out a Greek sanctuary, now again choked up, besides those tombs of the Apis which are among the chief wonders of Egypt, and which every visitor to Cairo goes to see. The temple, of which they may be said to have been the crypt, is long since fallen in, and the traveller who at the present day gazes on the vacant desert that spreads on every side cannot picture to himself how different it looked under the Ptolemaic kings and Roman Cæsars. There, under the very shadow of the stately temple, dwelt the different orders of the priests, as well as the attendants and keepers of the sacred animals. There were schools, and inns for the reception of pilgrims who came from the "uttermost parts of the earth," a market, and booths where

ANUBIS, THE GUARDIAN OF THE LOWER WORLD.

merchants sold their goods; there were barracks for the troops posted here, and, finally, there were little cells attached to the sanctuary, which are worthy of mention, since they may be regarded as the precursors of Christian monasticism. Greek papyri inform us that here, long before the birth of the Saviour, ascetic penitents led a gloomy, cloistered life in the strictest self-imposed seclusion. Of their own freewill these hermits denied themselves all intercourse with their fellow-men, and every grace and pleasure, even to a smile. Their miserable cells were constructed of mere Nile mud and unburnt bricks, and clung like swallows' nests to the great temple buildings wherever they found room, even on the roof. What these recluses needed for their support was brought to them by their relations, and given to them through the one small window of their hovels.[1] Here they strove for purity—*i.e.*, inward purification—in the service of Serapis, and it is but natural that in their over-wrought frame of mind they should have been favoured with marvellous dreams, and tempted by hideous apparitions. Whoever dedicated himself to the service of Serapis in this world was received by the god as one of his elect in the next. Already in the very earliest times the monuments speak of the "Fellows," the followers and the ministers of Osiris. There is much that is very touching in what has been handed down to us of the history of the twin-sisters Thaues and Taus, who were attached to the Serapeum as priestesses of Isis.[2] The papyrus which contains their petitions tells us that they had to fetch water in cracked jars from the Nile, which is at some little distance, for the three hundred and sixty daily libations at the altar of Serapis, and their reward for this labour of the Danaids was three cakes of bread a day, with an annual bounty of wheat and kiki-oil. But these doles were so irregularly paid that, in order not to die of hunger, they were forced to ask help by these petitions.

DOOR OF THE MASTABA OF TI.

On other occasions, however, and even in much later times, nothing was spared in this institution. When the Apis died, under Ptolemy I. Soter, not only was the whole of the immense sum devoted to his obsequies exhausted, but the priests found themselves obliged to borrow of the king fifty talents, or about £11,250. In

[1] On the occasion of the visit of one of the Ptolemies, a recluse saw the monarch and presented a petition on behalf of his brother.

[2] *Vide* "The Sisters," a romance by G. Ebers.

MASTABA OF TI.

the time of Diodorus the keepers of the Apis spent for this purpose a hundred talents, or about £22,500.

We will visit the grave of the bull who was interred at such a cost; we have seen how carefully he was tended in the Apeum of the temple of Ptah at Memphis. There the cow too was worshipped of whom it was reported that she became the mother of the Apis by the influence of a moonbeam. When a new Apis was discovered a festival was held throughout the land, and the happy owner was rewarded with princely gifts. First of all, the priests had to examine him, to see that none of the sacred marks—eight-and-twenty in all, according to Ælian—were lacking to him. His coat must be black; on his forehead he was to have a triangular white mark, on his back the figure of a vulture,[1] and on his right flank a white crescent; the hairs of his tail were to be of two colours. His tongue, too, was examined, for under it there must be an excrescence shaped like a scarabæus. It need hardly be said that a variety of ceremonies preceded and attended his admission to the temple of Ra. After his death he was carefully embalmed, and his mummy carried to the tombs before which we are now standing. Of their discovery Mariette Pacha himself writes as follows:—"I confess that when, on the 12th November, 1871, I first penetrated into the sepulchre of the Apis, I was so overcome with astonishment that, though it is now five years ago, the feeling is still vivid in my mind. By some inexplicable accident one chamber of the Apis tombs, walled up in the thirtieth year of Rameses II., had escaped the general plunder of the monuments, and I was so fortunate as to find it untouched. Three thousand seven hundred years had had no effect in altering its primitive state. The finger mark of the Egyptian who set the last stone in the wall built up to cover the door, was still visible in the mortar. Bare feet had left their traces on the sand strewn in a corner of this chamber of the dead; nothing had been disturbed in this burying-place, where an embalmed ox had been resting for nearly fourteen centuries. To many travellers it will seem a terrible thing to live here alone for years in the desert; but discoveries such as the chamber of Rameses II. leave an impression compared to which all others sink into insignificance, and which I can only wish I may experience again and again."[2]

CRANES.

Our old guide now opens a door which protects the rock passages and chambers from the inroads of the sand. The two oldest galleries of the Apis vaults[3] have become wholly impenetrable; it is only the most recent and finest which is open

[1] These are supposed to have been represented by the arrangement of the hair; on the bronze figures are represented a housing with a fringe, a solar-winged disc, or a scarabæus, and a vulture with expanded wings.

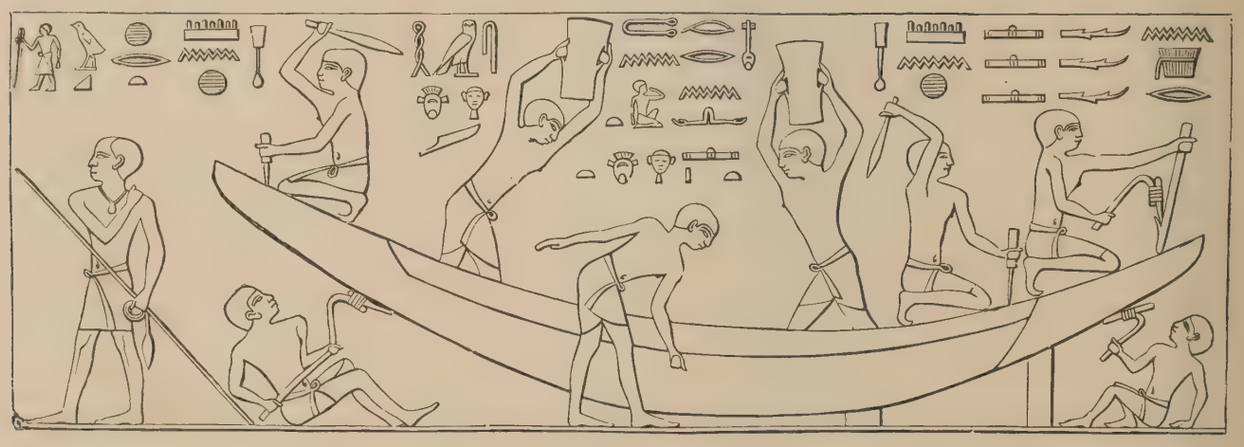
[2] The excavations here were four years in progress.

[3] The oldest sepulchres date from the reign of Amenophis III., about B.C. 1400; they had mortuary chapels above the sepulchral chambers.

to the visitor. It contains sixty-four tombs, and was excavated under Psametik I., of the XXVIth Saite dynasty, (who died B.C. 618); and it was enlarged even under the last of the Ptolemies.

We have lighted the tapers we are to carry. If a visitor of distinction comes to the catacomb it is illuminated by wax tapers set in wooden stands fixed for the purpose, or sometimes by the magnesium light which turns its darkness into day. But what there is to see is soon told. There is an antechamber, a long gallery with side recesses in which lie the coffins, and right and left near the entrance there are three connected corridors which run into the main gallery, forming altogether a plan like the hook in the ground-line of the letter P. All are hewn out of the living rock, and the length altogether may be about 1,070 feet. When Mariette Pacha opened the antechamber it looked like a museum of inscriptions, for above five hundred tablets, rounded at the top, were fastened to the walls, the votive offerings of pious pilgrims in memory of their visits to this sacred spot. No one, when erecting such a memorial, failed to indicate on the

BRINGING OF THE OVERSEER FOR THE RECKONING.

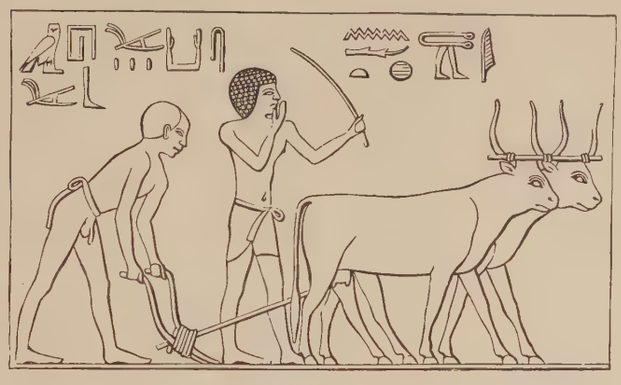


SHIP-BUILDING.

tablet the day, month, and year of the king's reign, or when the deceased Apis, to whom his pilgrimage was addressed, was born, installed, and interred. It may easily be imagined what services these little monuments, now for the most part to be seen in the Louvre, have rendered in helping to determine the order of succession and duration of the reigns of many of the Pharaohs.

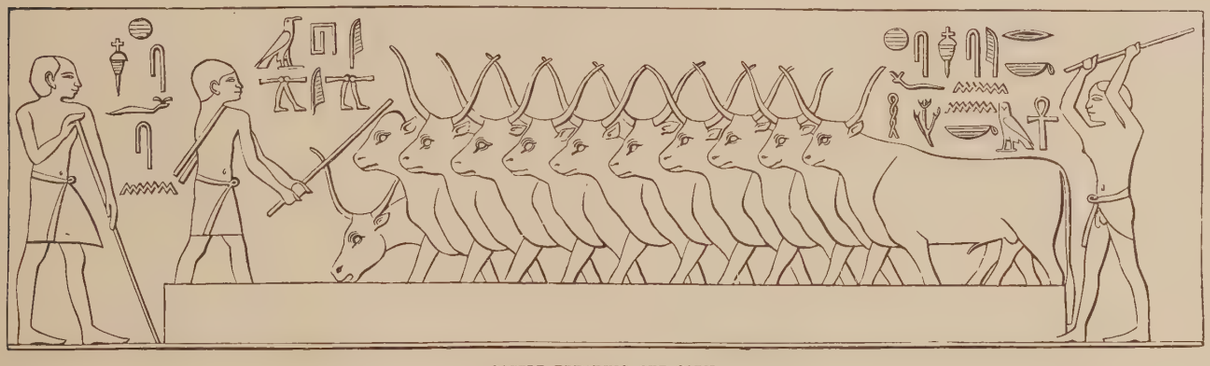
Twenty-four of the stone sarcophagi remain intact; many have been walled up with limestone into the recesses of the rock passage in which they stand; they are formed of various materials, the finest are of a dark greywacke, others of red

granite, and the least costly of limestone. The chests of the smaller sarcophagi are all of one piece, but the inscriptions have been preserved on only three of them. Even the least imaginative must feel, in the presence of these sarcophagi, as if transported into the Campo Santo of a world of giants. I hesitate in such a spot to descend to the bathos of mere figures; but the reader will best form a conception of the size of the coffins of these bulls when he is told that on an average, after the excavation of the interior, they weigh 130,000 lbs.



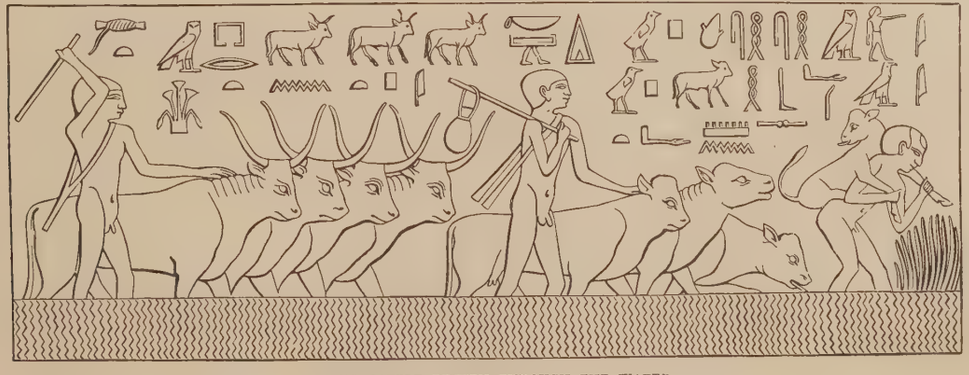
PLOUGHING.

Perhaps it is the enormous difference between the idea of a coffin that we have in our mind and the coffins we actually see before us that has so powerful an effect on the beholder's mind. Added to this, there is the thrill with which we see any object of primeval antiquity, and



CATTLE TREADING OUT CORN.

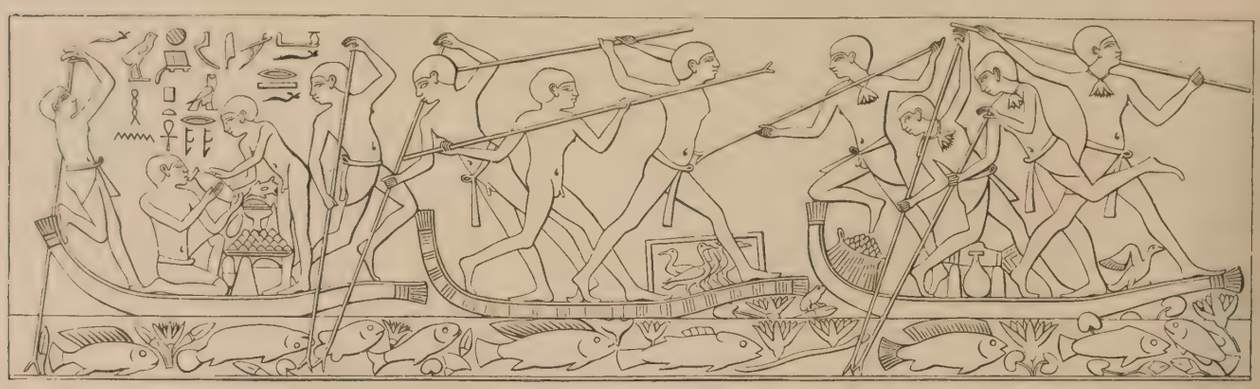
which has commanded the pious reverence of countless generations. It is true that these sentiments are inefficient to overawe the avarice of man. Even the tombs of the Apis had been thoroughly rifled long before they were buried in sand; Mariette Pacha found the lids of the sarcophagi pushed aside, and on many of



HORNED CATTLE DRIVEN THROUGH THE WATER.

them a heap of stones had been flung in token of contempt for the work of the heathen.

In an older portion of the Apis catacombs, which had fallen in, Mariette Pacha



ENJOYMENTS ON THE WATER.

found a human body with a golden mask on the face, and with many costly ornaments and amulets on the breast. From inscriptions it was known that these were the remains of Khamûs, the eldest son of Rameses II., who was high-priest at Memphis, and who is often mentioned as a particularly pious prince. He seems to have been buried among the sacred bulls as a special distinction above others.[1]

SALTING FISH.

The number of tombs choked by sand at Sakkarah is enormous; but I can here make mention only of the two finest of them; these are the Mastabas—as they are called—of Ti and of Ptah-hotep, of which only the first-named is usually open to the traveller's inspection. Both were erected by noblemen—peers of the realm—who served under that royal family, the Vth dynasty, which

WRESTLING.

succeeded the builders of the Pyramids of Ghizeh. We go down to the entrance of the mausoleum of Ti by a path cut in the sand, and at the very

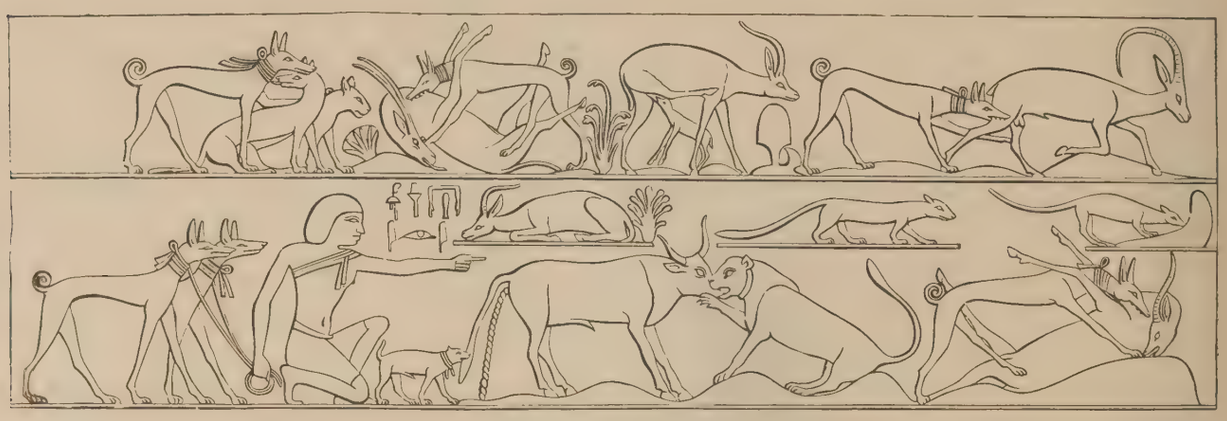
[1] He died in the lifetime of his father.

BEDAWEEN CAMP.

threshold, on the pillared supports to the right and left of the entrance, we are greeted by the portrait in relief of the dignitary himself, leaning on his rod

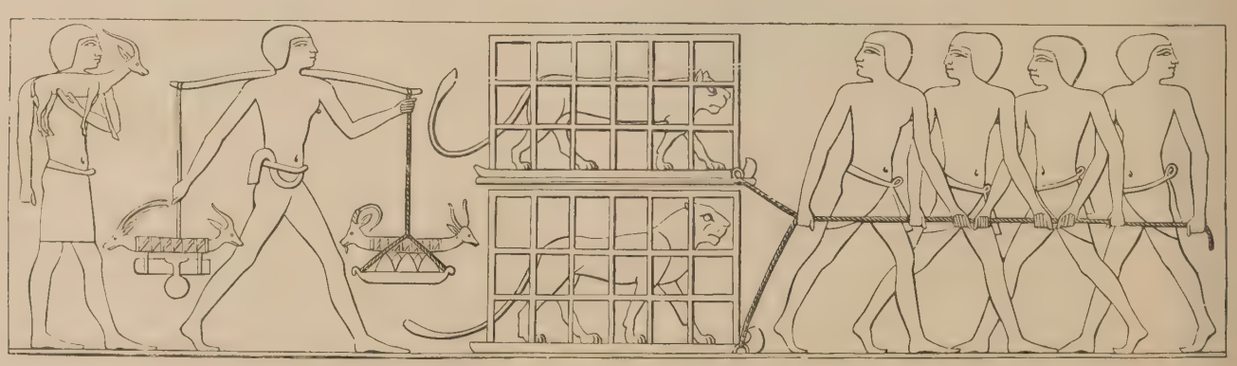
ACROBATIC EXERCISES AND GAME OF MOORA.

of office, who, as an inscription informs us, served under three Pharaohs. He himself was not of royal blood; but, as holding the office of high-priest, and



ENJOYMENTS OF HUNTING.

being, as he boasts, the friend and chamberlain of the Regent, "ruling in the heart of his lord" as privy councillor—"lord of the secrets" as superintendant



CAPTURED ANIMALS OF THE WILDERNESS.

of all government works and of the whole establishment of the scribes of his province—he was the husband of a princess, who is several times represented by his side. She was called Nefer-hoteps, meaning "her calm is beautiful,"

and her daughters, as well as she herself, are everywhere designated as "relations of the king;"[1] moreover, her husband dignifies her with the title, to which every Egyptian wife thought she had a claim, of "the mistress of the house," "the beloved of her husband," "the palm of pleasantness to her husband." The sarcophagus, with the coffin, stood in the middle of the open hall, which was surrounded with twelve pillars, while the thick walls sloped inwards towards the top like the sides of a pyramid. Here the survivors and dependants were wont to assemble to offer sacrifices to the dead; a corridor led into the smaller sepulchral chambers, where statues of the deceased and his wife were also found. All the walls of the Mastaba consist of a fine-grained limestone, and are covered with reliefs of extraordinary delicacy. The outlines are sharp and clear, and although the inability of the artist to represent true perspective annoys us, the vividness with which all is rendered that is necessary for the realisation of the subject compels our frankest admiration. All that was noble in the life of a distinguished Egyptian, and all that he required of his survivors after his death for his honour and for the welfare of his soul, are more beautifully and vividly set before us in the Mastabas of Ti and Ptah-hotep than even in the tombs at Ghizeh.

A MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT.

PIGEONS.

I should be only too happy to wander from wall to wall and reproduce for the reader one picture after another; but in this place I can only allow myself to mention the most remarkable details.

FLOCK OF PIGEONS.

The life of the great man was divided between his duties at court, the care of his property, and his pleasures among his family and in sport. The inscriptions mention in the barest words the relations that bound him to his royal master, while all that relates to his possessions and the joys of his life is set before us in pictures. As in Ghizeh, we here learn the extent of the herds of the deceased. Not Landseer himself could have sketched the profile of a heifer, an ass, a goose, or a crane with clearer outline than these modest artists;

[1] *Suten retch*, literally, "royal acquaintance."

the scenes which make us witnesses of the slaughter of the oxen are full of life, and little inscriptions everywhere help to complete the meaning of the pictorial illustration and to engage the sympathy of the beholder. In these we are told the weight of fat yielded by the slaughtered cattle; here we see the overseer's name written over his head, there the encouraging words shouted from one to another. Many trades and utensils have their names attached, so that these pictures have not a little advanced the study of the ancient Egyptian language. Above all, everything which serves as a contribution to the history of culture is of transcendent interest. The immense age of these pictures is indisputable, and yet it is hard to believe in it when we see what fixed forms all the aspects of citizen-life had already taken at the time when they were executed, and how, even at that early date, writing was in use even for the requirements of ordinary life. Lands and men were the most valued possessions of man. Hence we find secretaries reed and scroll in hand, and before them stand their lord's serfs; these were represented by the village magistrates, and above their heads we read: "What the heads of the villages brought in to the valuation." The sticks under the arms of the magistrates would seem to indicate that the business was conducted with scant mercy, and that even in those times the fellaheen paid their hard-won taxes far from willingly.

The line of hieroglyphics between the officers and the peasants says, "The rating by the chief intendant of the estates."

In another place the villages belonging to Ti are represented under the form of thirty-six female figures offering gifts of all sorts of country produce. The inscription above them runs thus:—"Food offering and drink offering from the villages on the family estates of the Chamberlain Ti, in Upper and Lower Egypt." By the side of each woman is the name of the place she represents. Such extensive estates, and lying so far apart, made it incumbent on the owner to provide good and efficient means of transport. The Nile and the canals were then, as now, the natural high-roads of intercourse; hence ship-building was actively carried on, and some of the pictures show the tools the carpenter had to use; others exhibit the forms of the finished boats, of larger travelling vessels and ships of burden. Ropes and sails were used, but instead of a rudder an oar was employed, moved by a man.

At that time, as at the present, the chief income of the wealthy Egyptian was derived from fields fertilised by Nile mud, and these pictures enable us to look on as eye-witnesses at every operation of the husbandman.

We will here only give the picture of the ploughman at his labour and the cattle treading out the corn. In the first picture we see a pair of oxen yoked together by a beam across the forehead. Over them is written, "A strong pulling"—of oxen; and over the peasant guiding the plough, "Labour at the plough." As we look at the second picture we are reminded of the passage in the Bible, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." This injunction is applicable to the foremost beast, above which it is written, "Trot on, beasts, trot on," and the overseer is about to give him a blow with his stick. Other pictures

show the sowing, and the flocks of goats, the grain flung upon the damp soil, the reaping of the ears with small sickles, the binding of the sheaves and the carrying of them home on asses. Even the "leasing," the gleaning, is mentioned; and while this recalls the Book of Ruth, there is another picture which reminds us vividly enough of Pharaoh's dream, which Joseph so sagaciously interpreted.

Seeing the picture of a hippopotamus-hunt in the tomb of Ti, we cannot but think of Behemoth, the Nile horse of the Book of Job: "His bones are as strong pieces of brass"—it is written—"he is the chief of the ways of God, was he made for him to play with? When the mountains bring him forth food and all the beasts of the field play; he rests under lotus-plants in the covers of the reed and fens."[1]

In one of the pictures in this Mastaba, which has even preserved its colour in many places, we see the noble Ti hunting the hippopotamus. He is shown of twice the size of his followers, leaning on his staff in his boat, which is overtopped by a papyrus-thicket of unusual height, which is the nesting-place of numberless birds. A hippopotamus and a crocodile are fighting, but the hunter's whole attention is fixed on the enormous river-horse which is already entangled in ropes,[2] while the huntsmen, whose efforts Ti is calmly directing, fling lances at it. The water swarms with scaly inhabitants, and the number in the nets, as well as that of the victims to the delightful sport of "sticking" the fish, is immense. On land we see the fish split, dried, and salted.

Nor was it only by water, but in the desert too, that the love of hunting of the nobles of that period showed itself. In the Mastaba of Ptah-hotep we find that worthy represented on a large scale, and before him a whole series of pictures representing his favourite amusements; gymnastic games, wrestling, and even the game of morra, which is still a favourite one—played with the fingers —in most countries bordering on the Mediterranean.

A great variety of beasts are ensnared by him and by his huntsmen. Here we see antelopes caught by the lasso, there well-trained greyhounds decorated with broad collars rush on the hunted gazelle; the domestic life of beasts of prey, even of the panther and jackal, is watched and depicted. A lion surprises a heifer; we meet with the hyena, the ichneumon, and the hedgehog;[3] nay, in the tomb of Ti, even with a stag. Who can enumerate and name the birds caught in Ptah-hotep's net? The hunters, when they come home, bring their lord the creatures they have caught alive—antelopes, gazelles, and lions. These last are shut up in strongly barred cages. The dogs, the master's favourites, follow the servant Khnum-hotep, who leads them in a leash; and there are dogs in the house too for his amusement. An ape and a dwarf are kept for sport in the more wealthy families. The followers of Ptah-hotep feast before him while he sits on his throne supported on lions' paws, and display their skill in playing the harp and flute. The first Egyptologist to whom we owe a reproduction of this picture, the careful and meritorious Duemichen[4] of Strasburg, takes it amiss in the

[1] Job xl. 18—21. The English version differs.

[2] The hippopotamus was harpooned.

[3] The hedgehog, *Erinaceus Æthiopicus* (Ehrenb.). The armadillo is found only in South America.

[4] *Die Resultate*, fol. Berlin, 1869.

ancient dignitary that he should have allowed his dogs to remain present at this concert, and even surmises that he must have cared more for the society of his hunting companions than for the piece of music that is being performed.

In truth it is difficult to preserve one's solemnity in this tomb, such a cheerful atmosphere pervades these pictures and bas-reliefs. It is as if they expressed the wish of the deceased to be joyfully remembered by his survivors.

HUTS AND HOUSEHOLD COMPANIONS OF THE FELLAHEEN.

Here a ship's captain shouts to the slow crew, "You are like apes." By the side of a flock of goats, which the herdsman is tempting with a basket full of fodder to follow him across the sowed field, we read the words, "This is how man loves labour." There is a regatta led by Ti, and one boatman calls out to his competitor, "You are free with your hands"—*i.e.*, you are too vehement. Above some running asses we see, "Man loves the swift and thrashes the lazy, so make haste." By a reaping scene it is written, "This is reaping: do it, I say, in due season." The ears are addressed in these words, "You are ripe," or "Well, you are large ones!" An ox being slaughtered, one fellow warns the other, "Keep steady." "I am doing it all right," is the answer. In a similar scene a man lifts up the leg of the slaughtered beast and touches the lips of another with the tip of his finger, "Look at this blood," he cries. "It is pure," says his companion. Most charming of all are the flocks of pigeons, which were trained as carriers at an early period in Egypt, and which to this day are kept in the poorest hovels of the Fellaheen. Among the hunting scenes many are broadly farcical.

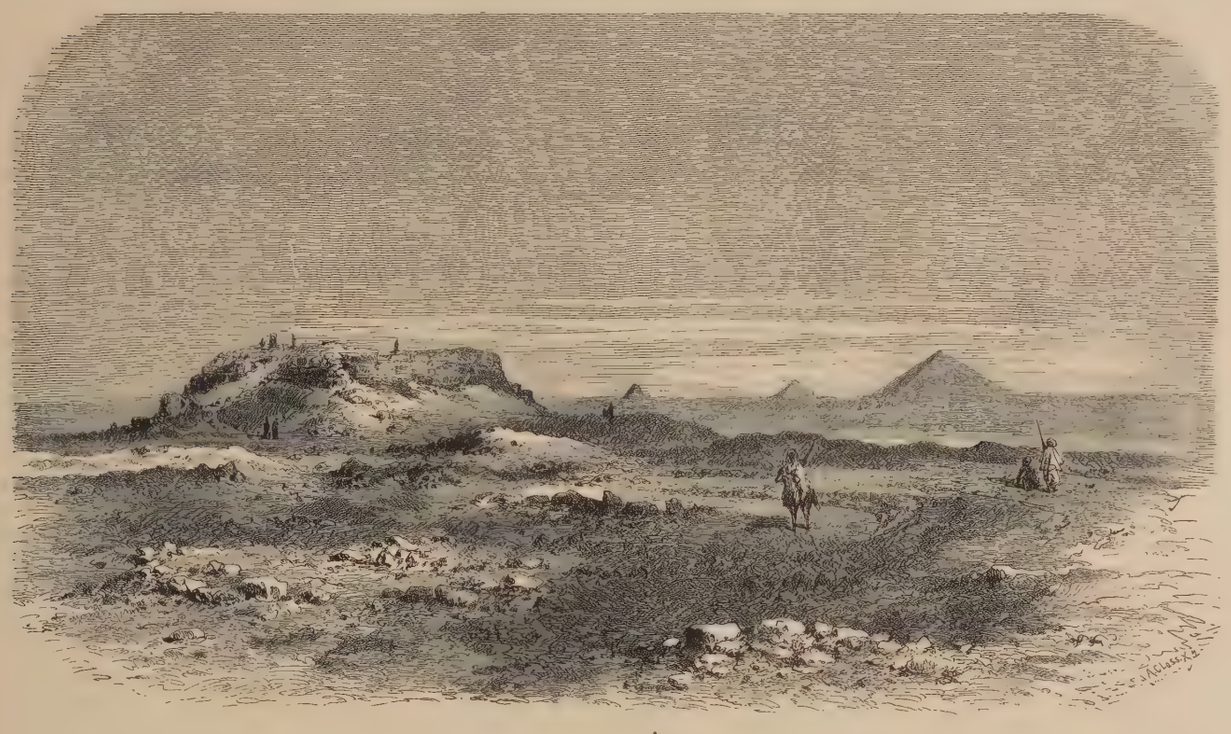
Nevertheless death is kept in mind. One painting shows us the funeral procession of a deceased noble. Wailing women open the procession, and are followed by the beasts for sacrifice, and by priests burning incense and sprinkling the earth with essences. Near the sarcophagus walks the widow, and behind we see the children and superior servants of the deceased; his innumerable train of servants, with offerings of all kinds, close the procession. Many inscriptions are addressed to the guardian of the nether-world, the guide of the soul in the next

SANDSTORM IN THE DESERT.

life, the jackal-headed god Anubis.[1] Nor did they forget to indicate the kind and amount of alms to be offered to the Manes of the deceased,[2] and the festivals when they were to be laid on the altar in the Mastaba.

Most of the numerous tombs of this vast Necropolis, even those which the zeal of the learned had once disinterred, now lie buried in sand. There is much that is interesting and remarkable about many of them, particularly one which was erected for a dignitary named Thunerei, in which Mariette Pacha found a long list of kings' names, which has done great service in restoring the chronology of Egyptian history.

The number of relics found in this spot within the last decade is almost



MASTABA FAR'OON.

countless; objects in stone, wood, and bronze, and other materials, besides beautifully-worked ornaments in gold set with blood-stone, turquoise, lapis-lazuli, and other stones for females, have been brought to light in this portion of the Necropolis of Memphis. Some of the most precious of these relics, and of the very highest antiquity, were found at Sakkarah, and are to be seen in the Museum of Boolak.

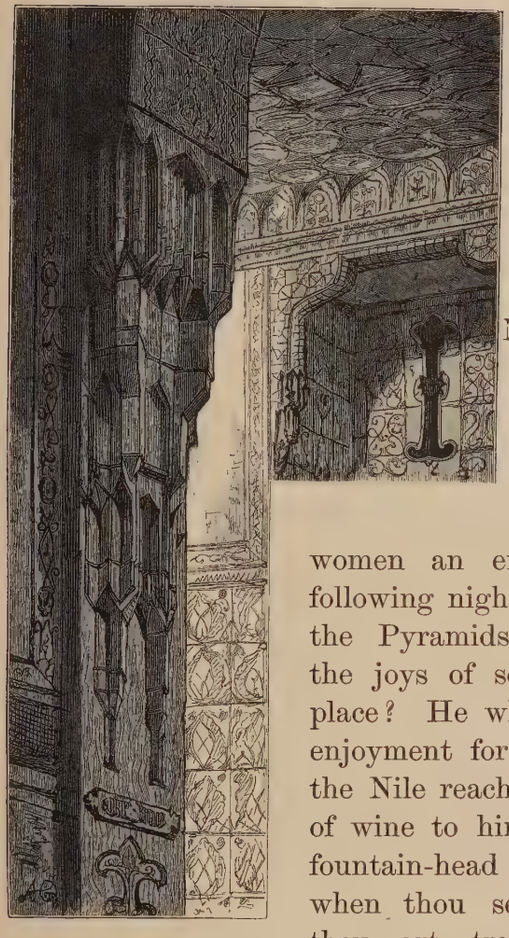
A thorough study of this Necropolis would require many days. The traveller who penetrates farther into the desert in order to visit the remarkable building known as the Mastaba Far'oon—and which may perhaps be supposed to be the slaughter-house where the numberless beasts were killed which were here sacrificed

[1] At this early period the sepulchral decorations are addressed to Anubis, not Osiris.

[2] In registers in the sepulchres containing a minute account of objects of the table, those of the later coffins have, besides lists of food, representations of objects of furniture and attire, and the numbers of each object.

—will not unfrequently meet a caravan of Bedaween from the Libyan oases who are rejoicing in their approach to the Nile after their painful journey across the waterless desert, and are resting for the last time before entering Cairo, which smiles on them in the distance.

Wandering here from tomb to tomb we have quite lost count of time. Night is spreading silently over the wide fields of the dead; only the revolting howl of the hyena breaks the stillness of the desert. The moon has risen and throws its filmy veil of silver threads over the Pyramids, the range of desert hills, and the green strip of fertile country.



CAIRO;

THE ORIGIN OF THE CITY.

IN ONE of the stories of the "Thousand and One Nights" a man of Mosul praises Bagdad as the "city of peace" and the "mother of the world;" but the eldest of the men whom he addresses replies: "He who has not seen the city of Cairo has not seen the world. Her soil is gold, her women an enchantment, and the Nile a wonder." In the following night Sheherezadeh praises the delights of the city of the Pyramids in the following rapturous words:—"What are the joys of seeing the beloved compared to the sight of that place? He who has seen it confesses that there is no greater enjoyment for the eye; and when he thinks of the night when the Nile reaches the desired height he returns the goblet full of wine to him that offers it, and lets the water return to its fountain-head (that is to say, he wants nothing more). And when thou seest the island of Roda with its shady trees, thou art transported with joyful delight, and when thou standest in Cairo by the Nile, when at sunset it is veiled in the tissue of sunbeams, thou art revived by a soft breeze that fans the shady shore." These are rapturous phrases indeed, dipped by the imagination of the enthusiastic poet in colours as glowing as those shed by the sun as it vanishes from the Egyptian heavens. And yet, he who has ever stood on the height of the citadel of Cairo, and gazed across its forest of minarets at the Nile and the Pyramids on the western

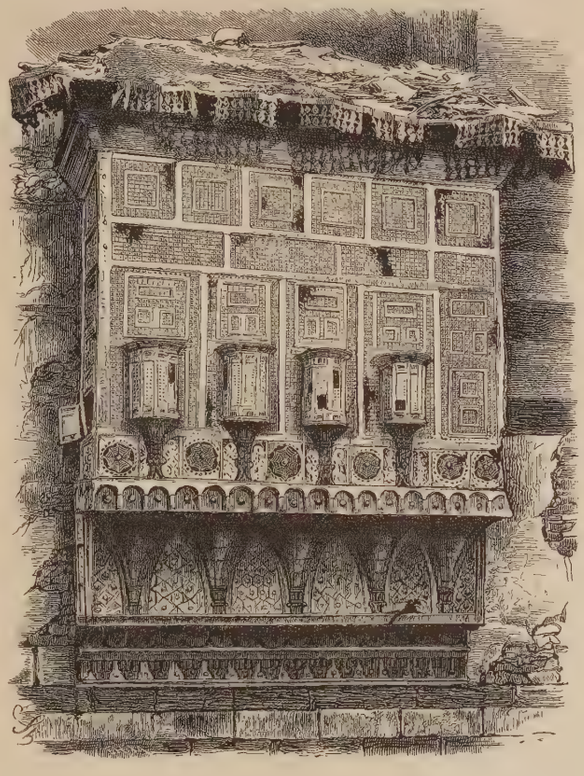
horizon—who has visited its streets and byways, its bazaars and mosques, its open squares and gardens—who has mingled in its gay, motley, thronging stream of life, in the stir and bustle of its inhabitants—he will ever remember the days of his sojourn in Cairo as a time when it was vouchsafed to him to live in the

LANE IN THE COPT QUARTER.

land of fairy-tale and romance—aye, even though nature have denied him the heavenly gift of fancy, and though his soul may never have felt the stir of a poet's dream.

To wander through Cairo is to meet constant novelty; only to look round is a joy, and merely to see is to learn. No man ever left Cairo without profit, or

without loss; for though every man takes home with him a thousand different impressions and memories that long shine bright in his fancy, he carries in his heart a vain longing which ever beckons him with a tempting hand back again to the shores of the Nile. "He who has drunk of the waters of that stream," says the Arab proverb, "longs for it for ever;" and again, "Ye shall not linger with impunity under the palm."



MASHREBEEYEH WINDOW.

How can we explain the magical charm that this marvellous city never fails to exercise? Certainly in its most fascinating spots there is nothing whatever of what we understand by a "fine city." The hill against which it leans is bare of all vegetation, and it is one of the youngest of the great cities of the East. One thing it has certainly above and beyond any other place that is known to me: it is so full of variety that a single ride takes us through more different elements of culture, productions of art, and objects of nature than in any other spot; "the three quarters of the earth here meet and touch."

Ere we are rid of the dust with which the desert-wind has covered us during our wanderings through the mighty remains of the age of the Pharaohs, we are standing on the carefully watered footway of a street on both sides of which are ranged handsome houses of European architecture. A few steps farther and we turn into a shady side-street where we walk between two high stone-walls. Not a window with shining panes allows of any friendly intercourse between the street and the domestic interior; but balconies with close lattices of wood-work project before us, behind us, above us, on the right hand and on the left, all along the street, concealing everything that lives and stirs within from the gaze of the passer-by or of the opposite neighbours. Through the interstices and openings of these lattices—which are worked with richly pierced patterns and delicately turned bars—many an Arab lady's eye peeps, nevertheless, down on us below; for the lattice, called the Mashrebeeyeh, admits air to the women's rooms, and allows the fair ones to see without being seen. The name of these outworks, which constitute the most lasting characteristic of the streets of old Cairo, comes from the Arab word Sharab—*i.e.*, drink—because the porous water-vessels called "goallah" are set in them to cool the water they

STREET DOGS.

GENERAL VIEW OF CAIRO.

contain; they are usually exposed to the air in round hollows in the floor of the balcony. In these thoroughly Oriental streets, where two riders can scarcely pass each other, it is always shady and cool, and the Cairene is wise to prefer them to the broad ones of the modern quarter.

We make our way towards one of the main thoroughfares, riding past the high door of a mosque. Pious Moslems come out of it, and politely make way for some Franciscan monks, who seem to be holding grave council close to the sanctuary of Allah. We now pass into a broader street. There beasts and vehicles crowd each

DRIVING THROUGH THE TOWN.

other, the men talking and shouting, while now and then we hear the bray of an ass, or the grunt of a camel; but the ear is never assailed by the clatter and uproar of an European town, for wheels roll silently over the soft unpaved roadway. We have hardly made our way fairly through the bustling crowd when we find ourselves on a vacant place with tumble-down houses over which vultures wheel, and where starving street-dogs are rummaging for bones among the ruins. Huge dry stones, among which even weeds disdain to strike root, lie in mighty heaps on one side; while on the other, behind yonder wall, in the well-watered garden of some great man, are collected the plants of every zone, revelling in moisture, bursting with sap, and growing with astonishing rapidity. At the gate of the park we meet an eunuch

mounted on an Arab horse with splendid trappings, and he casts a lowering glance at the fair Europeans who are whirled past him, unveiled and laughing, in their open Vienna carriages. A runner makes way through the crowd for the swift horses till they come to a standstill before a gaudy shop, in whose windows everything is displayed for sale that is dreamed of for feminine adornment, even in European capitals. In front of it a poor Arab offers for sale his wretched stock of nondescript wares on a miserable truck. A long string of camels now forces us to make way. They are tied together like boats in tow of a steam-tug; each carries on his humped back a bale of goods which is being conveyed to the railway, where

A LEARNED MAN ABSORBED IN THE KORAN.

the whistle of the engine mingles with the half grunt, half roar of the patient beasts. In the splendid garden of the Ezbekeeyeh square we see the black nurse of some Arab child side by side with the French "bonne" and her fair-haired charge; the Italian dandy lights his cigarette from that of a Nubian merchant; from the open window of an assembly-room, decorated with gilt mirrors and marble tables, ring out the latest European tunes, performed by a chorus of ladies; we pause to listen to the familiar strains, and are startled to hear, in the room next to the music-hall, the sharp clink of gold coins tossed on to a roulette table by the excited players.

Turn now into this side-street with its many balconies and finely pierced harem-lattices. There, in front of a "café," or tavern, on the ground-floor, sit a group

of black and brown folks listening with much complacency to the nasal recitative of a street-singer. His more than simple strains have no charm for the cultivated ear, and we hastily make our way through the group. There, riding on by a shady avenue of Lebbek-trees, we soon find ourselves again between the rows of houses of a narrow, gay, and busy street. The broad Nile gleams in the distance, and a forest of masts fills up the picture. That is the Harbour of Boolak. Side by side with a splendidly fitted steam-ship lies a clumsy Nubian barge with ragged lateen-sails, in form just like the boats we see on the monuments of Pharaonic times bringing the tribute of the Soudan to Egypt. Not far from the port stands a magnificent museum, in which the monuments and relics of antiquity are arranged in accordance with the highest requirements of the science of the West.

Of all the Egyptians who daily pass this building scarcely one in a hundred can tell his own age, and could hardly say whether "the Pharaoh"—under which name he designates the whole pre-Christian history of his country—lived three hundred or three thousand years ago. And yet it is among these ignorant men that the efforts of learning also find their home. In that vast building at Boolak slender Egyptian fingers pull from European steam-presses carefully printed sheets covered with learned Arabic texts. But we will turn our back on the "State printing-press" and the port, and return to Cairo proper, for in the courts of the University-mosque el Azhar—of which we propose to give further details presently—we shall find more students than in any "high school" of the West. Make yourself acquainted with those sages who live there in placid content, satisfied as it were with merely intellectual food, and then ask yourself whether you have ever seen a student more deeply immersed in his subject than that old Moslem who is striving for a right understanding of a difficult passage in the Koran.

This wonderful city is like a mosaic picture of contrasts. Still, to this day, the background of the picture is of Oriental colouring; but one Eastern figure after another is displaced by an European one, and those who desire to become familiar with Cairo as the metropolis of Oriental life must not delay.

The reader, we may hope, will follow us now. We are fettered by no considerations of time and space. The gates of palaces, the doors of mosques and schools, nay the inmost chambers of the houses are not closed to us, and we purpose to trace the life of the Cairene—great and small—from the cradle to the grave. We will introduce ourselves as spectators of his labours, and as guests at his feasts, and whenever a freer admission is granted to a trustworthy friend than to ourselves I will depute him to be your guide.

My business in these pages will be to present Cairo as it is; but in order to do so successfully, it will be necessary to describe how it developed.

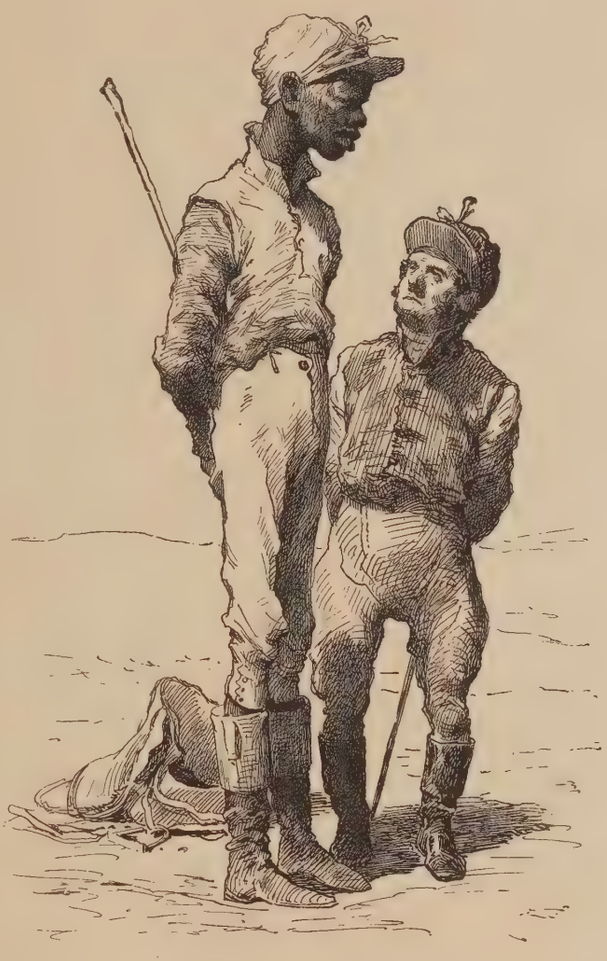
Memphis, the ancient capital of Egypt, with which we are already acquainted, may be called the mother of Cairo. It lay on the west bank of the Nile, while its daughter, the younger city, is spread over the tract between the river and the Mokattam range, between the desert-sand and the magnificent garden-land. The limestone eminence with the citadel serves as its backbone, as it were, while the

PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE HEART OF CAIRO.

Nile, whose swift waters rush past the garden-walls and quays of its western suburb, invites it to busy intercourse and traffic with distant shores.

The rocky hill behind the city is perfectly bare and barren.[1] Before the Lord God—so runs the old legend—revealed himself to Moses on Mount Sinai, He told all the mountains that he purposed speaking to his elect servant on one of them. Immediately they all began to strain and stretch themselves that they might seem tall and big; Zion alone—the mount on which Jerusalem stands—bowed and was humble. Then, to reward its humility, the Lord commanded that all the other mountains should give the plants that grew upon them to grace and deck it. The Mokattam parted with all its verdure in favour of Zion, and hence its name, which recalls an Arabic word meaning "to part."

During the splendour of Memphis only small hamlets stood opposite the Pyramids on the eastern shore of the Nile. One of the most southerly was in connection with the stupendous quarries which yielded the materials for the great buildings of the ancient city of the Pharaohs. The Egyptians called it Toroua, and as the prisoners of war were employed here as stone-hewers, and the name Toroua remotely suggested Troja, the story soon was current among the Greeks—who were so apt at seizing or coining legends—that here, near the modern Tourah, the captive Trojans had settled who had been led hither by Menelaus on his return after the fall of Ilion, and that he himself was said to have rested here with the recovered Helen.



BLACK AND WHITE JOCKEYS.

Another place of which we find early mention, and which formed the nucleus of the oldest portion of Cairo, was called Babylon, and it was said that it owed its origin to the Babylonians brought into Egypt by Cambyses.[2] We shall return to it again, but for the moment must direct our attention to a third and larger town which flourished here at a very early period. This is the venerable City of the Sun, Heliopolis. It was situate a few miles to the north-east of modern Cairo, and it was one of the most famous centres of learning of all antiquity. No one would willingly leave unvisited the spot where

[1] Called in Egyptian *kar-kar*, and mentioned as early as the VIth dynasty; it was the ancient arsenal.

[2] B.C. 527.

it stood, for there still exist there a tree, a spring, and a stone, which are all three accounted among the chief wonders of Egypt; moreover, one of the pleasantest things in the world is an excursion thither, on horseback or driving, either early in the morning or when the approach of evening lengthens the shadows.

As soon as we have left the houses behind us and have crossed the city canal —Khaleeg it is called—we see the large mass of buildings of Abbaseeyeh with its barracks, its military school, and its observatory. On our right lies the extensive race-course, with its stands built of wood, where the races are run in the month of January. English and Arab horses both enter the lists, and during the few minutes' struggle the former usually beat their Bedawee competitors, though these are so much the handsomer, and far exceed the northerners in "staying"

DROMEDARY RACE.

powers. The dusky jockey can keep his seat in the saddle just as well as the English one, and yet the white man—small as he is, in accordance with his calling—looks down with proud disdain on the wretched ill-fed lengthiness of the black one. In no class of the Cairene population is race-hatred so keen as among the drivers, grooms, and riders. The Arab loves the horse, and on his native soil will depute the charge of a horse to no foreigner. Hence it has not unfrequently occurred that the English jockeys imported by wealthy Egyptians have been subject to the murderous attacks of their swarthy rivals. Dromedary-races are frequently run, and it is certainly a strange sight when the antediluvian forms, as we might almost say, of the "ships of the desert" begin nimbly to move their long stiff legs and soft feet, and to throw them up before and behind in swift career. They are urged forward with shrill shrieks by their dark riders;

but with all their energy, and the utmost exercise of the beasts' strength, they cannot match the swiftness of the horse. No doubt they have the power of continuing to run steadily for some miles, when the horse that outstripped them in the first hour has long since given in, panting and gasping. The swiftest dromedaries are called "Hegeen," and we shall have occasion in another place to speak of the high value set upon them, and of the incredible distances they can cover without taking any rest.

No sooner have we passed the Abbaseeyeh than we are fanned by the pure air of the desert, along the border of which our way lies. The road is hot and dusty, but we soon shall be protected by the shade of the Lebbek-trees on the right and left, and as we approach one of the residences of the Khedive Tewfik Pacha our eyes are gladdened by the sight of well-irrigated fields, luxuriant green gardens, and vineyards bearing abundantly. Ask the labourer when he sowed the corn that now with ripe ears awaits the harvest — ask the peasant by the road-side when the noble trees were planted whose broad crowns now wave over the road, or that beautiful Eucalyptus which stands up above the hedge-row — and the answers you will receive will seem to you hardly credible. Trees which in 1869 had only lately been planted, and still needed to be propped, when I saw them again in 1873 had begun to spread broad leafy crowns. The Lebbek (*Albizzia Lebbek*), which has now for many years been conspicuously characteristic of Egypt, is said to have been brought to the valley of the Nile from Eastern India in the time of Mahommed Ali; and the botanist Schweinfurth states that propagation by offsets or cuttings, which with most trees can only be practised on young shoots and branches, can be effected in the case of the Lebbek with branches as large as a man, or even with portions of the trunk. Many of the gardens we have passed on the way are more luxuriantly beautiful, and better kept than the one before which we now halt and spring from the saddle; but none can compete with it in fame, for in its midst, and now enclosed within a railing, stands a sycamore, under which the Virgin Mary is said to have rested with the infant Christ during the flight into Egypt. The Khedive Ismail, during his visit to Paris in 1867, gallantly presented it to the Empress Eugenie. It is no doubt of great age, but we can only regard it as the

GARDEN ON THE ROAD TO HELIOPOLIS.

successor of an older tree which was already dead when Vansleb visited Egypt in 1672. This trustworthy traveller was told by monks in Cairo that the Virgin's tree had died of old age in 1656, and they showed him its remains, which were preserved as a most precious relic. It is true that the gardeners showed a stump as the remains of the original tree.

Not far from the rent, broken, and riven trunk of the present Virgin's tree, which seems to have been planted on precisely the same spot as the old one, and on which travellers innumerable have cut their names, a spring of fresh water flows from the ground—which in these climes usually yields only a salt and bitter fluid—

SYCAMORE OF MATAREEYEH.

and waters the garden by the help of a double water-wheel. This spring is mentioned in records of the highest antiquity, and when it was said, and believed for centuries, that the balsam-shrubs—of which Brocardi compared the leaves to those of marjoram—could thrive here and nowhere else, this phenomenon was ascribed to certain miraculous effects of this spring, which had got interwoven with the legend of the Virgin. The infant Christ, it was said, had been bathed in the spring, and from that time it had never ceased to flow with fresh water. In another place we are told that the Virgin washed the Saviour's swaddling clothes in it, and wherever a drop fell from them on the soil a balsam-tree sprang up. When their pursuers came up with the fugitives, the Virgin hid herself with the Infant in a hollow in the tree, and a spider concealed her from their gaze with its web. Much that is heathen may, however, be traced in these legends; at any rate, the Egyptian myths

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

tell us of a god who was saved from his pursuers by hiding in a tree, and also of balsam-shrubs that sprang from the moisture with which a celestial being bedewed the earth.

The Arabs call this garden and its environs, including the ruins of Heliopolis, which are about half a mile distant, Ayn Shems, which, with reference to the spring, is commonly rendered "fount of the sun," but seems actually to mean "eye of the sun."

This name was borne by an idol which had escaped destruction under the ruins of Heliopolis, and of whom it was asserted that if any one in possession of any office ventured to gaze upon it he was shortly after divested of his dignity. The story goes that the Sultan Ahmed-ibn-Tuloon,[1] having heard this legend, took his stand in front of the image and ordered stone-masons to destroy it. Thereupon it is said that after an illness of ten months he died; we know, in fact, that he died in Syria. This idol, known as the "sun's eye," was probably nothing else than an Egyptian statue which had stood, long years before, in the vast hall of the sanctuary of Heliopolis.

This famous temple of the sun is the only Egyptian temple of which a Greek (the geographer Strabo) has given us an exact description, and we must, therefore, especially regret that the words of the prophet Jeremiah have been so completely fulfilled: "He shall break also the images of Beth-shemesh [the house of the Sun] that *is* in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire" (Jer. xliii. 13).

In a few minutes we reach the scanty remains, and are standing before a fine obelisk, the oldest of all the monuments of this description, and the only one which still lifts its point skywards, though it was raised in the remote period before the incursion of the Hykshos. As the obelisk form was sacred to the sun-god, we cannot be surprised to learn that the City of the Sun was full of obelisks, of which there remained in the time of Abd-al Lateef such a mass of fragments that he calls them innumerable. Most of those obelisks, which were transported by the Cæsars to Rome, Constantinople, and Alexandria (among these Cleopatra's needles), were originally erected here in front of the gate of the temple of the sun, and never stood singly, but always in pairs. The one we are now admiring had its twin, which was overthrown in the year 1160 of our era—and not in 1260, as Makreezee states. Arabs have even seen the copper caps that covered their peaks, and the verdigris that stained their reddish-brown sides. The ruins of the overthrown obelisk probably lie deep in the soil near its still erect companion, which was placed, more than four thousand years since, in front of the gates of the temple of the sun by Pharaoh Usertesen I. The inscriptions, which are alike on the four sides, exhibit the grand and simple style of that period; they record the name of the king to whom the obelisk owed its erection, and tell us that it was set up at a feast initiating a period of thirty years. Its base is deep in the ground, for since its erection the surrounding soil has risen by successive depositions of Nile mud to a thickness of nearly six feet; in the inscriptions that cover it numberless

[1] Who lived from A.D. 870 to A.D. 884.

wasps have made their nests. In the time of the Khalifs this obelisk and its brother were known as "Pharaoh's needles."

Heliopolis, which was called An by the Egyptians and On by the Hebrews, is mentioned at a very early date. The temple of the sun in its midst was as old as the worship of the day-star, with which all the religious doctrine and cultus of the Nile valley was connected. Ra, under his two chief aspects—Harmachis, the morning sun, and Tum, the evening sun—was worshipped here in a combined form, Tum-Harmachis; and associated with him were various female divinities, among which Hathor, Iusas, and the oft-named Nebt-hotep held important positions. I should not here allude to Osar-Sup or Osiris-Sup[1]—a god frequently mentioned as connected with Heliopolis—if it were not that I believe this name to have survived in that of Osarsiph,[2] which was given to Moses by the Greek narrators of the Jewish Exodus.

REPRESENTATION OF THE BENNU.
(*From a Ritual.*)

The temple of the sun was said to have been the dwelling of the immortals so early as at the time of the wars of the gods. When Typhon and Horus had wounded each other their wounds were bound up and healed in the "great hall" of Heliopolis. A manuscript on leather in the Berlin Museum informs us that King Amenemha I. and his son Usertesen rebuilt the temple itself; and there is no lack of Egyptian and Greek evidence to show that the god who bestowed light on the earth also aroused and nourished the enlightened powers of the spirit, and that under his protection a college of priests flourished here whose fame outshone the other similar foundations at Sais, Memphis, and Thebes. Herodotus celebrates the sages of Heliopolis as the most enlightened of all Egypt, and though the Greeks criticised their mystical style and method, they admired their astronomical and other learning; and the houses where Pythagoras, Plato, and Eudoxus had lived, while attending the great school of the City of the Sun, which even in his time was deserted, were still pointed out to foreigners in the city; its lecture-rooms seem to have been only with difficulty accessible to strangers.

Certain names of sages of Heliopolis have come down to us. May not the priest Potiphar for one have belonged to them, to whose daughter Asnath the Pharaoh married his favourite, Joseph? We could even give many details, if space permitted, as to the possessions of the priests of the sun—which under Rameses III. had become enormous—as to the establishment of the temple, and the sacred trees and animals worshipped within its precincts. We will only allude to the pale-hued bull Mnevis;[3] to the lions with a glistening skin which were kept here; and,

[1] According to some, Osiris, as represented before his destruction and embalmment, figured often in the Arabian nome at Mount Sinai, and also in the Eastern Desert. He was represented as a mummied hawk, and the name Sup or Supti is also applied to Sekhet, a form of Bast.

[2] Strabo, xvi. 760.

[3] Adored at Heliopolis as the incarnation of the sun-god Ra.

OBELISK OF THE TEMPLE OF THE SUN AT THE OLD HELIOPOLIS.

above all, to the Phœnix. Everyone knows the myth of the bird of the land of palms, which, after being burnt, rises again from its ashes and brings them to Heliopolis at intervals of five hundred years, by which symbol the consolatory hope found expression that all that dies, fades, or is extinguished in nature shall revive to new life, bloom, and glory. The image of the Phœnix, says Horapollo, signifies the traveller returning from strange and distant lands after a long separation. Venus, as we call it, the brightest and purest planet of the eastern

THE ISLAND OF RODA.

heavens, bore the name of the Phœnix; her early setting, giving promise of her return in the evening, seemed also to promise to the dying mortal that it should be vouchsafed to his departing soul to shine in renewed glory in the dark night of death. The Egyptians called the Phœnix "Bennu,"[1] and on many inscriptions the temple of the sun, or some portion of it, is called the house of Bennu.[2] All Egypt took part—we are told by later authors—in pilgrimages to this temple. The most splendid of the Pharaohs added to their names the title of "Prince of Heliopolis," to the exclusion of all other names of might; and proud conquerors,

[1] According to the Ritual, or Book of the Dead, the Bennu in Heliopolis was the creator of visible and invisible beings.

[2] Also roofed or capped home, or else city of pyramids or obelisks.

who at Memphis were content only to sacrifice to the great Ptah, submitted to many ceremonies in the sanctuary of the sun-god, and qualified themselves for admission into the mysteries of the temple.

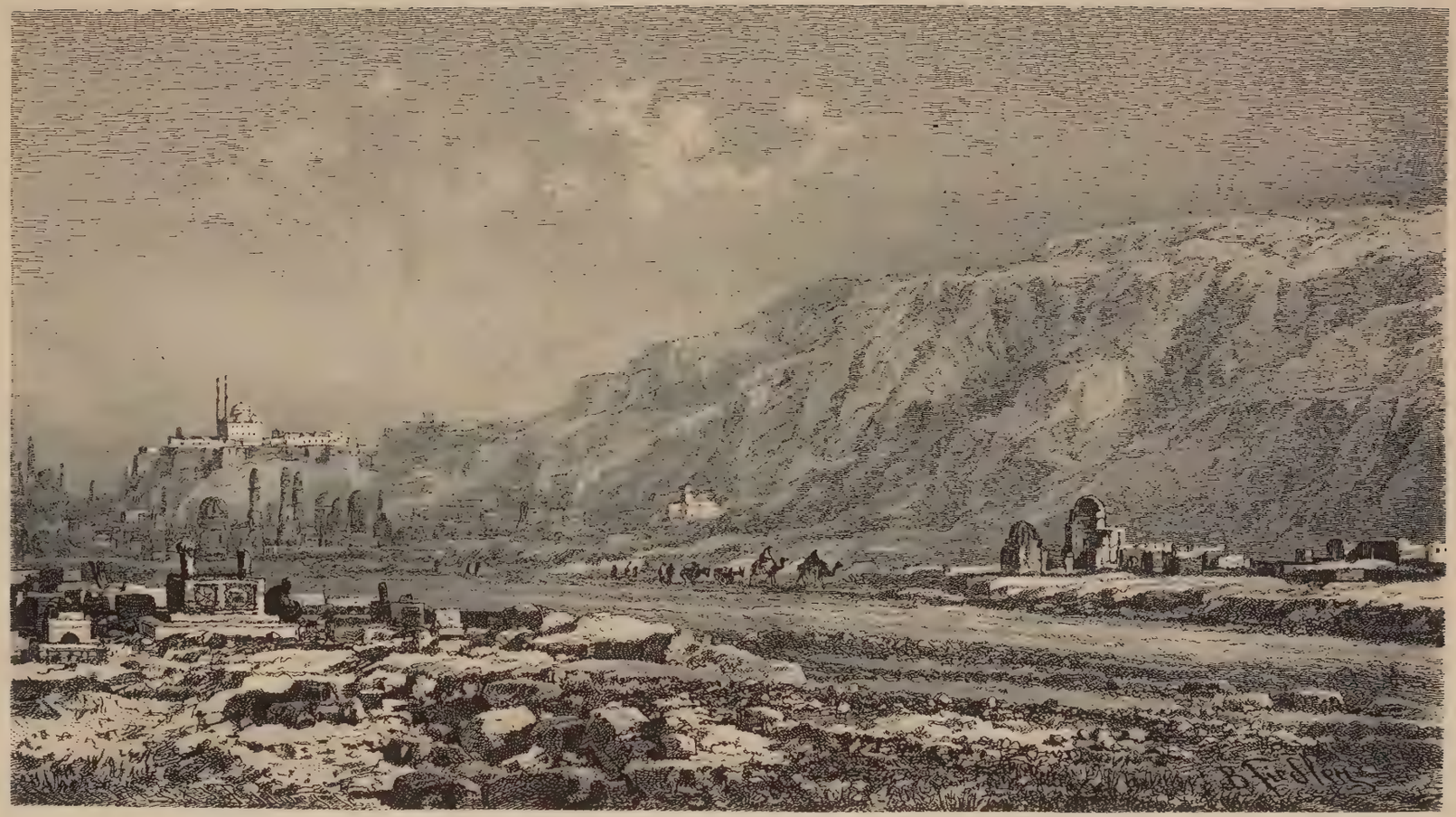
Amenemha I., the founder of the sanctuary of the sun, entreats, after he has begun the great work (which was not finished till the time of his son, Usertesen), "May it not perish by the vicissitudes of time, may that which is made endure!" This desire of a great king, which has come down to us through the leathern roll now preserved at Berlin, has not been fulfilled; for of his magnificent structure, built for all eternity, nothing remains but the obelisk we have seen, and a few blocks of stone scarcely worth mentioning. The Persian Cambyses is unjustly accused of having destroyed the temple and city of the sun, for the city was minutely described in detail long after his time, and the temple was still flourishing; nay, many remains of the sanctuary, that have now long since vanished, were described even by Arab authors.

Abd-al Lateef calls Heliopolis (Ayn Shems) "a small town with ruined but still visible walls, from which it is easy to recognise that they belonged to a temple, since hideous and huge idols were found there of hewn stone, thirty ells high, and with symmetrically formed limbs." The gate of the city—probably the pylon of the temple mentioned by Strabo—was as yet undestroyed. Almost all the figures, pedestals, and ornaments which our informant saw were covered with sculptured pictures and hieroglyphic inscriptions.

If we ask what has become of the enormous quantity of hard, well-hewn blocks which were still seen here at a comparatively late period by trustworthy witnesses, the answer is that Cairo the Great, growing up in the immediate neighbourhood of the temple of the sun, carried them off; and to find them again we must search through the foundation-walls of her palaces, her mosques, and her dwelling-houses. Heliopolis shared the fate of Memphis; but we have now made acquaintance with the old Phœnix, and will return to the young "bird of the sun" that rose from its ashes.

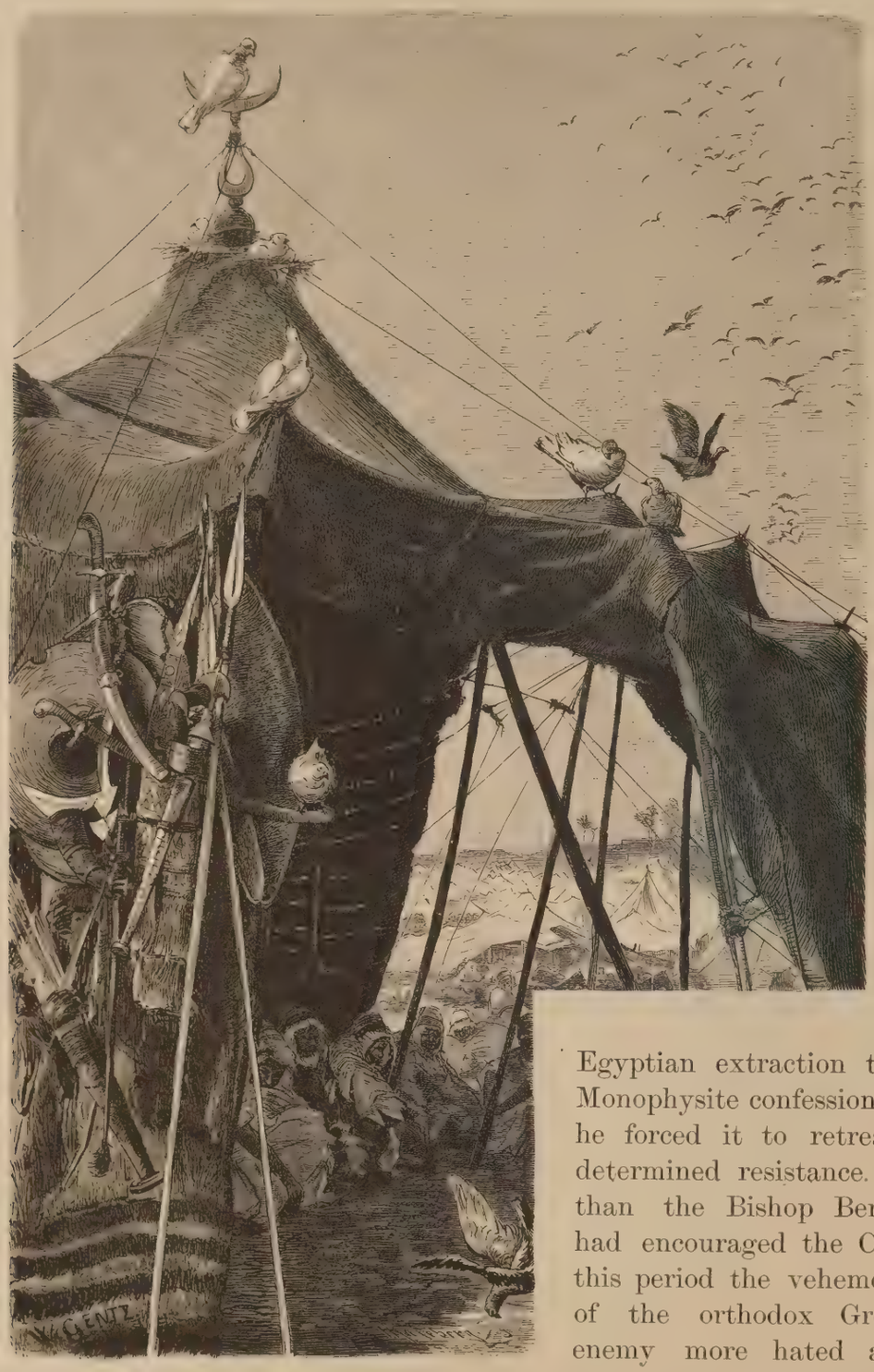
Back again to Cairo is our way. The asses that carry us are not less indefatigable than their driver Ahmed, the very type of the Egyptian *gamin*, of whom I shall have more to tell presently. We go over the whole city, crossing at its farthest southern limit the canal known as the Khaleeg, which traverses it in a perfectly straight line from one end to the other, and is said to have been projected by Amroo to connect the Nile with the Red Sea. We stand here at the spot whence it starts; this is Old Cairo, the humble mother of a magnificent daughter, the Fostât of the Arabs in the first century of Islam.[1] At the extreme south of it, after a short walk through streets of the most provincial character and appearance, we come upon a modest quarter, where considerable remains of walls and a fortification of the time of the Romans have been preserved. This is the Egyptian Babylon, the fort which for centuries contained one of the legions which kept Egypt in subjection to the Cæsars and the Byzantine emperors. This town was bathed on the west by the Nile, which divided opposite to it, embracing a large island,

[1] The era of the Hegira commenced the 15th–16th July, A.D. 622.



MOKATTAM.

in shape like an oleander-leaf. Roda is the name of this island, and in early times it was connected with Babylon by a bridge.



THE TENT OF AMROO.

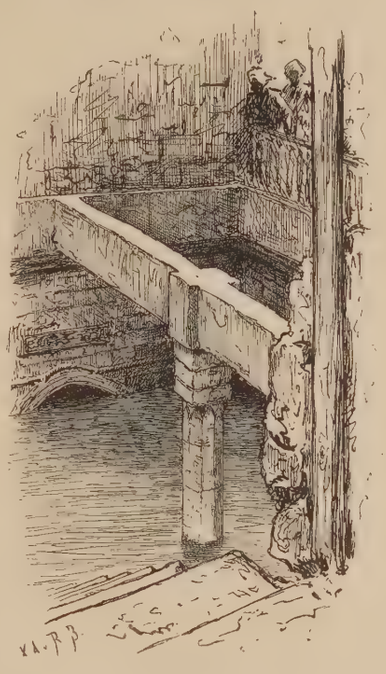
The history of the foundation of Cairo and of the dominion of the Arabs in Egypt is inseparably connected with these sites.

In the year A.D. 638 a small band of religious fanatics, adherents of the new religion of Mohammed, came into Egypt from Syria, under the leadership of Amroo-ibn-el-Asee. At Fâramah he, with his four thousand men, encountered the great imperial army commanded by the Greek governor Mukaukas, and with the help of the Copts—that is, of those Christians of Egyptian extraction that had clung to the Monophysite confession—who had joined him, he forced it to retreat after a month of determined resistance. No less a personage than the Bishop Benjamin of Alexandria had encouraged the Copts to revolt, for at this period the vehement dogmatic hostility of the orthodox Greeks made them an enemy more hated and dreaded by the Monophysites than the Mohammedans were. For the orthodox church pillaged their cloisters, closed their churches, had for a long time impaired their estates by unjust fines, and crippled their freedom by imprisonment; and they looked to the Mohammedans merely for rescue, in the first instance, from the heretical

OLD CAIRO.

Greek emperors, priests, and officials, their oppressors and tormentors. After several battles the Greeks withdrew into Babylon, where they were besieged by Amroo, to whom the Khalif Omar had sent reinforcements.

The Arab warriors of that day were heroes, and their statesmen were sages to be regarded as in no respect behind the noblest figures whose memory has been kept green in the history of other nations. What Decius Mus, Curtius, or Arnold von Winkelried has acted more nobly than Zoobeyr, who resolved to sacrifice himself in order to lead his comrades to victory? He set up a ladder close to a breach in the wall and climbed up it sword in hand, but unobserved. Having reached the top he shouted to his companions a jubilant "Allah akbar!" in which, at his command, they all joined in loud acclaim. The besieged, thinking that a strong troop of the enemy had scaled the wall, fled—and Babylon was in the hands of the Arabs.



THE NILOMETER.

The vanquished garrison withdrew to the island of Roda, whence the Governor, Mukaukas, entered into negotiations for peace with the conquerors, after destroying the bridge that connected the island with the mainland. Two Copts went as envoys to the Mussulman camp, and Amroo detained them there a few days in order that they might become acquainted with the earnest and pious character of his warriors, and report it to their comrades. The deeply religious and noble lives of these defenders of their faith could not, in fact, fail of its effect on the envoys, and after a few contests by word and deed a treaty was concluded, by which the Copts pledged themselves to pay an annual poll-tax of two dinars, excepting only the old men, women, and children. The conquerors, on their part, resigned all claims on the land or property of the vanquished, and granted a free retreat to the Greeks who would not submit to the exaction of a tribute. In the course of a former chapter, describing New Alexandria, I have already related the honourable testimony borne by Mukaukas to the Arab character when the emperor reproached him bitterly with his weakness in yielding, with a force of 100,000 men, to an army of 12,000. After the whole Coptic population of lower Egypt had submitted to him without a single blow, Amroo turned upon Alexandria—which was still at that time the heart of Greek life in Egypt—in June 640. We know already that it was forced at last to succumb after a valiant resistance. Amroo wished to establish his residence in Alexandria, and began to construct a palace and to assign quarters to his troops; but the Khalif did not approve of these measures, and rightly so; for the unquiet mercantile port, used as it was to faction and strife, seemed but ill adapted to be the centre of a new and re-awakened vitality.

Amroo, therefore, retired to Babylon again, in whose neighbourhood his tent and camp, Fostât, had remained pitched. For when he was about to set out

OLD ARABIAN HOUSE.

for Alexandria, and had commanded that his tent should be removed, he had been told that a pair of pigeons had built their nest on the top of it. At this information the general desired that his canvas house should be left standing, "For God forbid," said he, "that a Moslem should refuse a shelter to any living being —one of God's creatures—that has put itself under the protection of his hospitality." Thus it occurred that on his return from Alexandria his old tent was still standing. He took possession of it again, and proceeded to found a new city which received the name of Fostât, or "the tent." At an early date the Arabic name for Egypt—Misr—was transferred to the new capital, to which the present name, Kâhira or Cairo, was not added till more than three centuries later; to this day, indeed, it is still called Misr or Masr by the inhabitants, and by Egyptians in general. The name of Old Cairo was first used when Fostât had sunk to being merely a suburb of New Cairo.

SCALE OF THE NILOMETER.

The building of the city progressed rapidly under the guidance of four master-builders, and the streets and quarters which were assigned to the soldiers, according to their nationalities, were distributed among the gardens and pleasaunces which the Arabs found ready laid out. There stood the fort of Babylon, whose "iron gate" opened on the Nile, and the bridge of boats which joined the island of Roda to the mainland; there rose the old Coptic church of the Virgin, which, indeed, had been built before the founding of Fostât, and in whose crypt to this day a spot is pointed out where, as under the tree at Matareeyeh, the Holy Family is said to have rested during the flight into Egypt; there—as far as Mokattam—lay verdant groves and vineyards, and in their midst stood up the "light-fort,"[1] as it was called, in which the Greek and Roman governors were accustomed to reside when visiting this neighbourhood.

The famous Nilometer, or Mikyas, on the island of Roda was, it would seem, not transferred thither from Memphis till after the founding of Fostât. Makreezee, in 1417, saw the remains of an older Nilometer, and its successor, after much improvement and restoration, serves to this day as the standard of the inundation which everybody watches with anxious expectation throughout Egypt. The Arabs assert that it was not constructed till fifty-six years after the founding of Fostât.

The visitor wishing to see it and the island can no longer avail himself of the bridge of boats, long since destroyed. A light boat will carry him over the narrow arm of the river to the large ill-kept garden of the estate of Hassan Pacha—in which, however, large vines, orange and lemon trees, roses, jasmines, and a variety of ornamental shrubs thrive luxuriantly, enclosing in their verdant bowers a fine summer palace in the Turkish style. The Mikyas itself is within a covered vault or chamber, the roof being supported on simple wooden pillars; it was built to replace the earlier structure which was destroyed at the end of the last century. The quadrangular tank, in which stands the octagon pillar, is walled all

[1] The *Leukon Teichos*, the "White Wall" or "White Fort": the ancient Citadel.

THE SACRIFICE TO THE NILE.

round, and communicates with the river by a canal; the pillar is supported by a beam at the top, and on it are inscribed the ancient Arabic measurements.

In the walls of the chamber there are small niches ornamented with simple corner pillars, and vaulted with low pointed arches, which were in use here as early as the beginning of the eighth century. Among the Kufic inscriptions which have been preserved on them, the finest owe their existence to Mamoon, the son of Haroun-er-Rascheed, "the friend of science," who restored the injured Mikyas in A.D. 814. The restoration of the Nilometer effected under the Khalif el-Mutawakkil is the most celebrated, as it was that which procured it the name of the *new* Mikyas.[1]

In the very earliest times the Pharaohs had understood the necessity of measuring exactly the amount or deficiency of the inundations of the Nile, and Nilometers are preserved which were erected high up the river in Nubia by kings of the old empire;[2] by princes, that is to say, who reigned before the invasion of the Hykshos. Herodotus tells us that the water must rise sixteen ells[3] for the inundation to be considered a favourable one; if it remained below this mark the higher fields failed in obtaining a due supply of water, and a dearth was the result; if it greatly exceeded it, it broke down the dykes, damaged the villages, and had not retired into its bed by the time for sowing the seed. Thus the peasant, who could expect no rain, and was threatened neither by frosts nor storms, could have his prospects of a good or a bad harvest read off by the priests with perfect certainty from the scale of the Nilometer; and not by the servants of the divinities only, but by the officers of the realm, who calculated the amount of taxes to be paid to them in proportion to the rising of the river.

The standard was protected by the magical power of unapproachable sanctity, and the husbandman himself has been strictly interdicted from the earliest times to this very day from casting a glance at it during the time when the river is rising; for what sovereign could bear to disclose without reserve the decrees of Providence as to the most important of his rights, that of estimating the amount of the taxes to be imposed? In the time of the Pharaohs it was the priesthood that declared to the king and to the people their estimate of the inundations, and at the present day the sheykh, who is sworn to secrecy, is under the control of the police of Cairo, and has his own Nilometer, of which the zero point is said to be somewhat below that of the ancient standard. The engineers of the French expedition first detected the fraud by means of which the government endeavoured every year to secure the full amount of taxes.

When the Nile has reached a height of fifteen old Arabic ells and sixteen kirat (the ell, or cubit, is five hundred and forty centimètres, about seventeen feet eight inches, and contains twenty-four kirat—the kirat being less than nine inches) it exceeds its lowest level by more than eight ells, and has reached the height requisite to enable it to irrigate the highest fields, reaching to that which the Arabs call Kefa.

[1] The present Nilometer; the old one had been destroyed by an earthquake.

[2] As, for example, the measurements of the height to which the Nile rose at Samneh in the reign of Amenemha III., of the XIIth dynasty, and the Nilometer at Elephantine, which has disappeared with the two temples in 1822; this last was Greek.

[3] The statues of the Nile of the time of the Romans in the first century A.D. represent the sixteen cubits as infants playing about the river-god. (*See* p. 17.)

This happy event is announced to the people who await it in breathless anxiety, and the opening of the dykes may be proceeded with. We shall presently describe the festival held on this occasion from the remotest times. The extent of the inundation has been watched with equal eagerness at every epoch of Egyptian history, and at

COURT OF THE MOSQUE OF AMROO.

the present time customs prevail, and we hear views expressed, which can be traced by direct descent to the time of the Pharaohs; and yet during the dominion of Christianity in Egypt, and later again under sovereigns governing a nation wholly converted to Islam, the old worship of the Nile, with all its splendour, its display, and its strange ceremonies, was extirpated with the utmost rigour. But some

portion of every discarded religion becomes merged in the new one that has supplanted it as a fresh form of superstition, and thus we discover, from a Christian document dating from the sixth century, that the "rising of the Nile in its time" was no longer attributed to Osiris, but to a certain Saint Orion; and, as the priests of antiquity taught that a tear from the eye of Isis led to the over-flowing of the Nile, we hear the Egyptians of the present day say that "a divine tear" has fallen into the stream and caused its flood.

As soon as the cutting of the dykes takes place, a coarsely moulded figure made of Nile mud is—even to this day—flung into the river with much rejoicing of the people, by whom it is called "the bride"; and it is considered as a substitute for a fair virgin who, it is said, used to be richly dressed as a bride and cast into the stream to purchase its favours. When, after the founding of Fostât, the Nile did not rise to its proper level, Ibn-Ayas relates that the Copts implored the governor Amroo to allow them to offer such a victim to the river. The general refused, but when the Nile remained at its low level and famine seemed to threaten the land, Amroo made the Khalif Omar acquainted with the state of affairs. His messenger came back with a letter and the order to cast it into the Nile. Amroo obeyed, and in the very next night the Nile reached the required level of sixteen ells; the letter of the Commander of the Faithful contained these words: "To the blessed Nile of Egypt. If up till this time thou hast flowed only by thine own will, then cease to flow; but if thy stream was obedient to the command of the most high God, we beseech that God that he will grant thee thy necessary increase." This pretty legend is hardly credible, because the ancient Egyptian faith forbid human sacrifice as strictly as the Christian religion itself. However, in pre-Islamite times some kind of offering was no doubt cast into the stream, though not a maiden; and Makreezee tells us, so circumstantially as to exclude all doubt, that in the fourteenth century the Christians were wont to throw a reliquary with the finger of a saint into the Nile to secure a good inundation. It may be well to mention in this place that the mystery as to the cause of the rising of the Nile has long since been solved. It owes its origin to the rains which fall at that time of the year in the tropics, and to the melting of the snows in the high mountain-ranges of the cradle of both the primary streams of the Nile. Its increase, at first hardly perceptible, begins early in June; it rises more and more rapidly from the 15th to the 20th of July, then proceeds more slowly till towards the end of September, when for a few weeks it remains at much the same level, or sometimes shows a slight decline; in the middle of October it swells once more, reaching its highest level—at which it can remain only a few days—and then, gradually sinking, it returns to its lowest ebb.

It is to the Nilometer that the island of Roda owes its fame, and there is little else that the visitor will find worth seeing beyond plantations, houses, and the modest tomb of a sheykh, unless we mention a venerable Mandoorah-tree with spreading branches, called by the Arabs Hakeem-kebeer, "the great physician," to which they make pilgrimages in order to be cured of fevers and other disorders. The devotees kneel down at its root, and its boughs are thickly hung with fragments of cloths of every description, the votive-offerings of the sick and thank-offerings of

THE SACRED TREE OF FATIMA.

the convalescent. Its sanctity is so highly esteemed that the pilgrims regarded Herr Welsch's wish to sketch it as sacrilege, and it was only by force and cunning that he succeeded in completing his portrait of this vegetable physician.

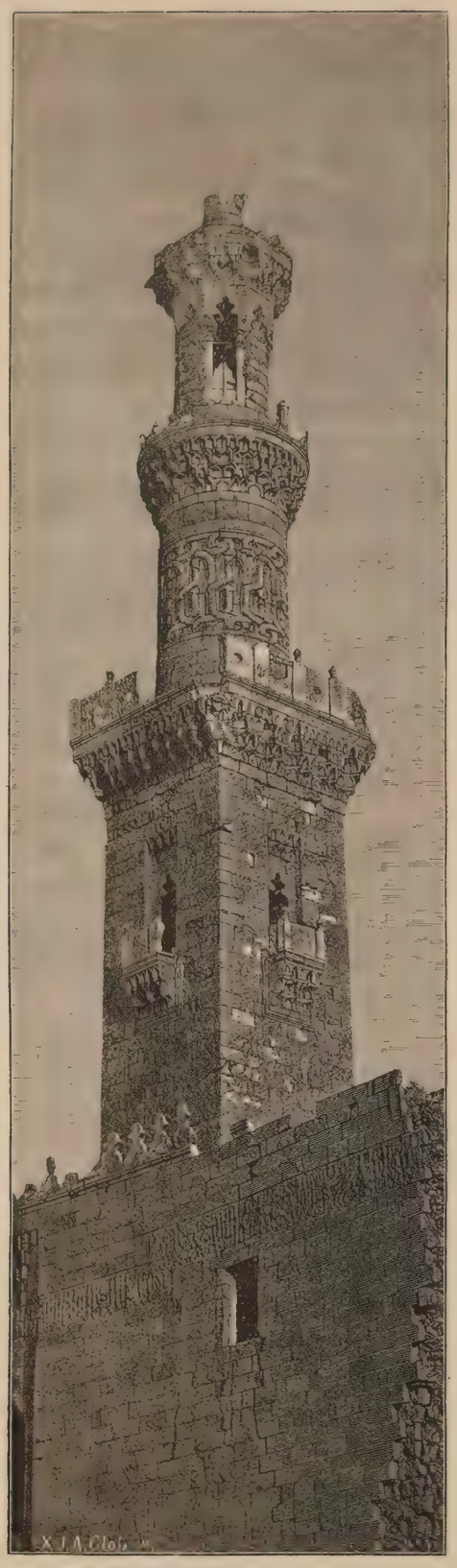
A legend has been preserved which says that this tree was planted by Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, but I could not trace its origin. Siyootee, who died in 1506, does not allude to it. We are, however, better informed as to the period when the oldest mosque in all Egypt was built; to this day it preserves the name of its founder, Amroo, and we can soon reach it, after leaving Roda, by traversing the streets of Fostât with their squalid rubbish heaps.

The Mosque of Amroo is called with justice the chief mosque of Cairo. The conqueror of Egypt caused it to be erected in the spot where, during the siege of Babylon, Koteybah the merchant had pitched his booth. The new sanctuary was fifty cubits long and thirty wide. The raised pulpit, where the Koran was to be read and which Amroo had set up, had to be removed by order of the Khalif, because he thought it unseemly that the listeners, being true believers, should stand any lower than the reader. Opposite the chief entrance was situated the governor's house, which has long since vanished from the face of the earth; and very little has come down to us even of the mosque of Amroo in its original form, for only thirty-three years after it was built it was pulled down by the Governor Maslamah, newly constructed, and ornamented with a minaret; and two centuries later it was magnificently restored after a fire. The traveller who at the present day, after wandering through the narrow mean streets and clambering over heaps of rubbish, comes upon the dusty grey walls of this edifice, can hardly believe that enclosed within is one of the most venerable and grandly planned works of Arab architecture. When he enters the vast court of the mosque he will at first be startled by the immense breadth of space enclosed by the colonnade; then he will be filled with regret and indignation at the deplorable and reckless carelessness which has left this noble monument to fall into decay; but finally, when he has striven—irrespective of injury and ruin—to conceive justly of this glorious building as a whole, he will be full of sincere admiration and will yield to that thrill of veneration without which we cannot contemplate anything really great and grand.

The Mosque of Amroo is called the "crown of mosques," and in a certain sense it justly deserves the name, not only for its venerable antiquity and the grandeur of its style, but also because in it, and in it alone, more than once in times of common peril the representatives of all the creeds and confessions that worship the one and only God have met together in common supplication to Him.

What a scene it must have presented when, in the time of Mohammed Ali, Moslems led by their Ulema, Christians of every confession led by their bishops and patriarchs, Hebrews following their reciters or Rabbis, trod the broad court of this sanctuary and bowed with one accord before the Most High. If this grand devotional procession had had any but a mere earthly aim—the increase of the Nile—it would have been a still more gratifying incident to relate.

A closer inspection of the arrangement of this building seems to be required of us; and for this reason, that it may be said to be the finest specimen of a temple of worship of the oldest epoch of Arab architecture. The Mosque is not a house



MINARET OF THE MEMORIAL MOSQUE OF BARKOOK.

of prayer; it was originally only an open court surrounded with colonnades, of which the pillars and columns on the side lying towards Mecca are usually more richly ornamented than the rest. The minarets — slender towers generally standing near the doorway, but not unfrequently over it—are never absent. The Muezzin mounts to the top of them to call the faithful to prayer. The court of the temple of Mecca, which encloses the Kaabah, built as it was in the times before the foundation of Islam, may be regarded as a type of the simplest form of mosque; but the natives of the land of Mohammed were so ignorant of the arts of construction that they usually built their dwellings merely of clay and dried palm-branches. At the present time the mosque at Mecca still consists of a court enclosed by arcades, and in the midst of it are the Kaabah and the famous spring Zemzem.[1] The first minaret was no doubt a palm-tree, which the Muezzin climbed up to call the faithful to prayer; and when the religion of the Prophet required that places of worship should be erected, the faithful seized upon those buildings which they found ready to hand in the countries they had subjugated. A concession to any better style that might have existed, or an adaptation to their own needs of the architecture of the more advanced foreign nations, seems never to have been thought of. The pillars with their slender shafts reminded the sons of the desert of their palms, the cupola recalled the tent (Kubba), and they adopted both at an early date. It is wonderful to observe how the Greek spirit modified the primeval Egyptian polygonal column, and adopted it as an organic architectural element in the structure of the Doric temple—from which it never became dissevered—while at the same time the fine Greek sense of beauty added a certain nobility to the type. It was quite otherwise, though again in conformity with their religion and character, that it was applied by the Arabs, who came sword in hand, the conquerors of the nations. They unhesitatingly tore the pillars from the temples and palaces they

[1] At this spring, according to Mohammedan legend, Abraham performed his ablutions when he came to worship the Kaabah.

found standing, however noble and worthy of preservation they might be, to place them, unaltered, in their own buildings, regardless alike of the order to which they belonged, the thickness or the form of their shafts, and the nature of their materials. If they seemed too short, they raised them on a massive base; all they cared for was to make them of equal height as supports. The Arabs learned the structure of the cupola from the Byzantines, and brought it, as we shall see, to high perfection. The successful transformation of the round arch—which had long been known to other nations—into the pointed arch first occurs in their buildings. But the rich ornamentation of flat surfaces with arabesques is quite peculiar to them. This they borrowed from the arts of carpet and tissue weaving, known to them from the earliest times, and still we do not find it applied in their earliest buildings, for they had not yet learnt to transfer these designs from their looms, festal clothes, and tent rugs to the decoration of a stone surface.

No trace of such ornaments is to be found in the Mosque of Amroo, and it was not till later that it became a characteristic and unfailing feature of the Arabic style of architecture. We do not even meet with the peculiarly Arabic and very frequent *stalactite* ornament which is such a charming compromise and connecting link between the flamboyant and the perpendicular; but we will do full justice to its fantastic forms when we meet with it later on.

On the other hand, in the Mosque of Amroo there is no lack of those details of construction and articles of furniture which occur in all mosques, and with which we will at once make the reader acquainted. We can, however, more advantageously introduce him at another opportunity to the tombs of the founders, the schools, the public wells, and other benevolent foundations which are generally connected with a mosque.

The court, in which we have already recognised the most ancient form of the Mohammedan plan of worship, and which is never wanting in mosques even of later date, is called Sahn-el-Gama. In the midst of it, in the Mosque of Amroo, close to a palm and a thorn-tree, is the well Hanefeeyeh, intended for the prescribed ablutions; this is often roofed in and richly ornamented. The court of the Mosque of Amroo is encircled on all four sides by arcades closed on the outer-side by a wall without windows. A peculiar sanctity is attributed to the side lying towards Mecca, which in Egypt is to the east, and it encloses the holy of holies, known as the Liwan. While the colonnades to the north and south of the court have no more than three rows of pillars, and that to the west only one row of double pillars—which, indeed, are all overthrown but one pair—there is a perfect forest of columns on the eastern side. They are arranged in six long rows all at equal distances, and constitute a magnificent arcade, where they throw strange lights and shades on the pavement covered with torn mats, and afford a picture never to be forgotten, even by the traveller who, like myself, has also stood in the mosque-cathedral of Cordova—of all churches the most crowded with pillars. Most of the columns in the Mosque of Amroo are of marble, and have capitals of every imaginable form known to ancient art. Here the acanthus of the Corinthian order meets the eye, there the Ionic volute; and side by side with the Byzantine cubic capital we come upon the floral capital of the Ptolemaic period carved by Greek

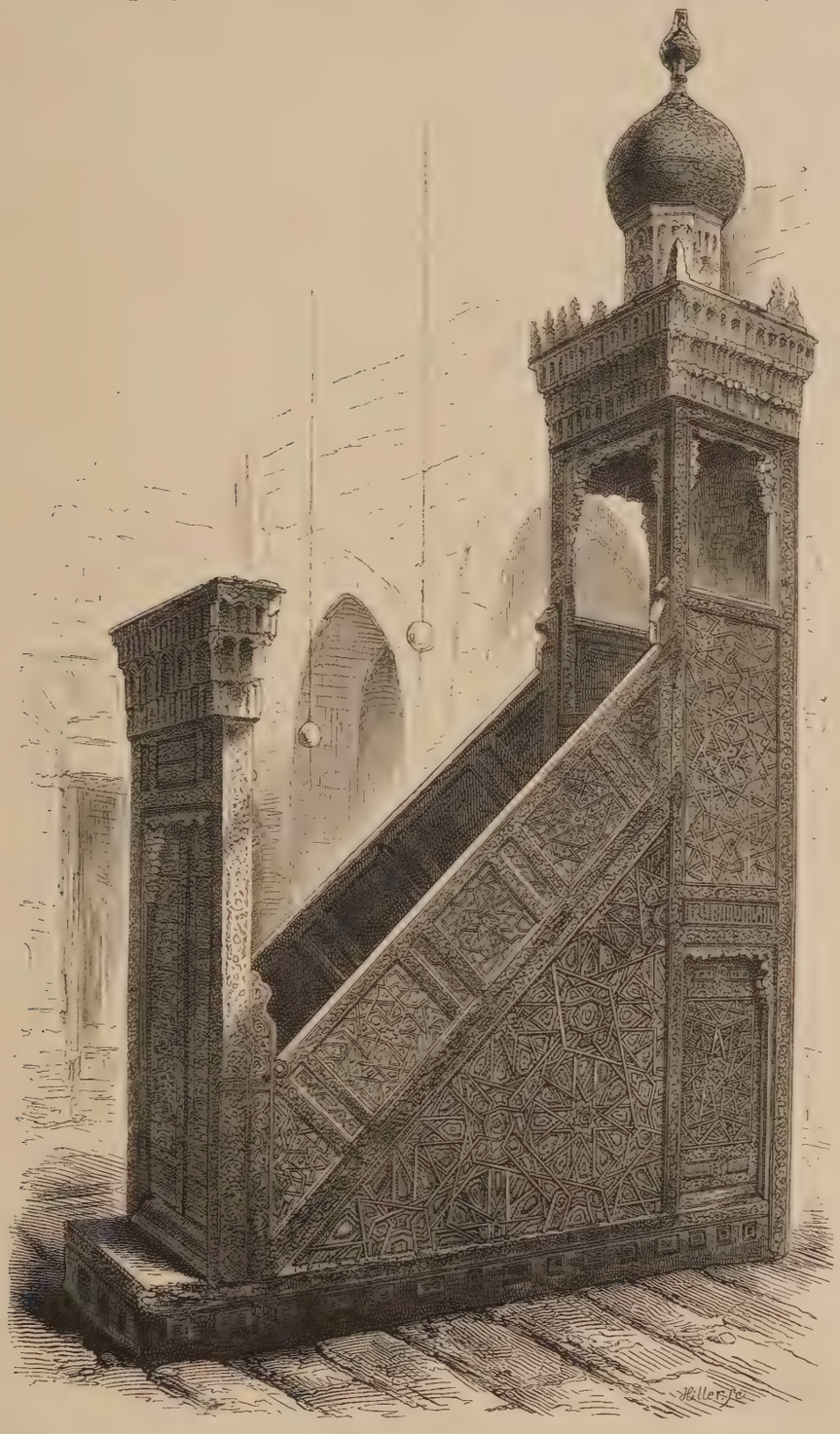
hands. Only the forms of ancient Egyptian art are carefully excluded, as in all Arab buildings. If only these pillars could tell us whence they came, how much might we learn—down to the very latest trace of the splendid, but vanished, temples and churches of Memphis, Heliopolis, and other ancient towns in the neighbourhood of Cairo, which were still living cities at the time of the founding

LIWAN OR SANCTUARY OF THE MOSQUE OF AMROO.

of Fostât! Very possibly at this time a column from the temple of Aphrodite props one side of an archway, while the other is supported by a pillar which once stood by the altar of a church to the Virgin.

Out there, where a solemn twilight reigns instead of the garish light of day, we see the prayer-niche—Mihrab or Kiblah—which is to be found in every mosque. It shows the believer in which direction he must turn to seek Mecca. In front of this, on feast-days, the Koran is read, and it is often richly ornamented with mosaic and stone carving. On its left is the Mimbar, or pulpit—a tall erection of wood, led up to by a straight staircase covered with rich carving or inlaid work; over it

there is usually a bulbous-shaped cupola supported on a sort of wooden baldachino. To the right of the prayer-niche once stood a desk, now destroyed; but in other



THE MIMBAR OR PULPIT IN THE MOSQUE OF KAYT BEY.

mosques the Koran is placed upon such a desk during divine worship. Nearer to the court, and standing between the same two rows of pillars as the Mimbar, there is a wooden platform surrounded by a balustrade, and generally raised on four

feet or pillars; it commonly stands away from the wall, but is sometimes attached to a pillar, and from it, on Fridays, the praises of God and the Prophet are proclaimed. This duty is performed by the preacher's assistants—Imam or Khateeb—and consists in repeating the verses of the Koran that are read in the prayer-niche in so loud a voice that the most distant member of the congregation may hear and understand.

Among the pillars of the Mosque of Amroo there are three which have a greater attraction for the Cairenes than even the grave of Abdallah lying at the north-east corner of the Liwan, or holy of holies, though he was the son of the founder of Fostât and of this house of worship, and is revered here as a saint. A fine pair of twin-pillars in the terribly injured western portico are a particularly favourite resort, for it is said of them that only true believers can squeeze through between the two shafts. The well-fed rich man naturally finds the passage through this "eye of a needle" more difficult than the lean and hungry wretch; but "even grief may grow fat," and many a pious Moslem has gazed with anxiety on his stout dimensions, and has had to bear the ridicule of his leaner neighbour — always maliciously disposed — at finding the passage too narrow for his bulk.

THE PILLARS OF ORDEAL.

The third pillar in repute stands in the Liwan, not far from the prayer-niche, and bears the trace of the prophet's whip, or, as others say—more mindful of the fact that the mosque was not erected until after the death of Mohammed — the whip of the Khalif Omar. When Amroo began to build the great court he entreated either one or the other—for the sake of historical probability we will say the Khalif Omar—to send him a pillar from Mecca. The Commander of the Faithful thereupon ordered one to fly at once to Fostât. But twice did the pillar defy his orders and remain where it was; when at his third command it made no sign of moving, its angered lord hit it a blow with his whip, and adjured it in the name of God and the Prophet to obey. At once the marble cylinder rose, shot like an arrow through the air, and dropped down on the site of the building. The Arabic inscription, showing the name of Mohammed in relief in white on the dark ground of the pillar, is very singular. On feeling over the letters that form the name not the slightest relief or intaglio is perceptible to the touch, and it is difficult to understand how they can have got marked upon the stone, in which they seem to have grown by some freak of nature. Herr Lüttke is of opinion that these characters must have been produced by blows on the marble with a blunt instrument, which effected a small disintegration *under* the surface.

At the present time the Mosque of Amroo is but rarely filled with devotees; but there was a time when its now bare walls were clothed with gorgeous

colours and splendid gilding, when twelve hundred and ninety copies of the Koran lay on an equal number of desks, and when, as darkness fell, no less than eighteen thousand lamps were lighted. The number of pillars in this mosque is said to have been greater than that of the days in the year, but at the present time only two hundred and fifty remain standing; and what a magnificent spectacle must it have been when, within the illuminated enclosure as light as day, thousands of the faithful stood arrayed as if in order of battle!

No one is allowed to sit down in the mosque, and there is neither seat nor bench to be seen, for the Mohammedan says that prayer is a fight against the devil, who seeks to hinder his approach to God and the Prophet. Therefore the true believers stand arrayed in ranks like a regiment led forth against the enemy, of which the individuals are likened to an army under the command of a general, and at their head stands the Imam or prayer-reciter as protagonist—Promachos—in the spiritual strife. Each believer is supported by a pair of angels sent from Heaven; these stand one on the right hand and one on the left of each supplicant as soon as he enters the ranks, and remain with him till prayer is ended. The front rank or van of the worshippers is called by Moslems by the same name as the ranks of a real army; both are termed Saff. The standing place of the Imam, the prayer-niche of which mention has been made, in the theological vocabulary of the Moslems is called Mihrab, and the word is said to be derived from another, Harb—meaning "war." Prayer, after the prescribed ablutions, is begun by reciting the Fatihah, the first verse of the Koran—the Paternoster of the Mohammedan—and it ends with a farewell to the guardian angels; it must be recited with deep prostrations to the ground, Rik'ah, their number varying with the hour of the day. Often, indeed, the soul of the devotee remains untouched under the discharge of these strictly prescribed formulas, and yet surely nowhere are worshippers to be met with so absorbed in their devotions as here. In Cairo, as elsewhere, the most diligent frequenter of the House of God easily passes for the most pious of men, and so it is not always the purest motives that urge the Moslem to the mosque; but the true believer prays not there alone, and more than once it has happened that I have come upon a traveller in the desert who, at the hour of prayer, in the conviction that he was alone with his God, knelt down on his little prayer-carpet, raising his arms in the prescribed manner with such devout fervour, such ardent longing and ecstasy, as though it had been vouchsafed to him to gaze through the open portals of Heaven itself.

To the Moslem, as to the Christian and Israelite, his God is everywhere present; nay, his mosques are built without any solemn ceremony of laying the foundation-stone; they have no inherent sanctity, and their site and walls are not dedicated by any consecration, for space would be too narrow to contain the Almighty, whose throne is Heaven and the earth His footstool. Mesgid—this is the original form of our word "mosque"—signifies a place to honour the Lord in; but the Arabs usually give their places of worship a different name—Gam'a, "the place of assembly"—and the mosque is, in fact, before everything a Gam'a, or

place of assembly for the faithful, who, on the Yaum al gam'a—*i.e.*, the day of assembly (their Sabbath, kept on our Friday)—gather together in order that they may first bind themselves to a great and closely knit unity, and there listen to the proclamation from the top of the Mimbar, by the mouth of the preacher or Khalif, of the inspiring confession that there is no God but the omnipresent Allah, and that Mohammed is His prophet. Then all the assembly sink like one man to the earth, in acknowledgment of this declaration, as if stricken down by its overpowering grandeur.

We shall see many more mosques founded in the City of the Khalifs, and take occasion to visit them.

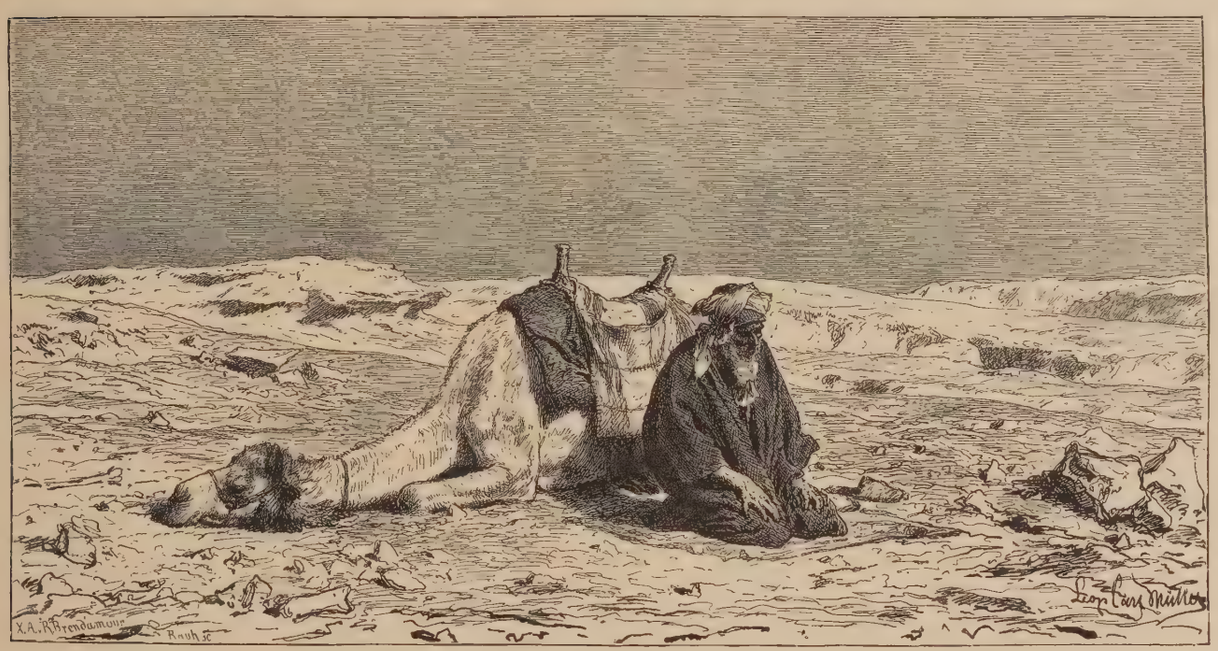
That which is considered the oldest after that of Amroo is the one built by

ROW OF SUPPLICANTS.

the governor Ahmed-ibn Tuloon, and named after him. At the time of its erection Fostât had been founded less than two hundred and fifty years, and yet the life of the Egyptians had undergone a complete transformation in all its details and manners, and the scene of it had been altered in every particular. Amroo himself had promised to all the Copts who should accept Islam and pay the poll-tax perfectly equal rights with their conquerors, and many went over to the faith of Mohammed. War, pestilence, revolt, persecution, extortion by the strong from the weak, in short every calamity had decimated the inhabitants of the Nile valley under the Byzantine rule, and so made room for the Arabs. Many tribes settled in Egypt, and soon gave up their nomad life to establish themselves as husbandmen in the country, and in the cities as merchants and artisans, or as students and artists, thus inaugurating a new life—always linked with the old it is true, but characterised by peculiarities in all its relations.

The decayed language of the Egyptians—the Coptic[1]—with its insubordination to grammar, and its numerous words adopted from the Greek, was soon displaced by the supple and subtle Arab tongue. It has already been related in our account of Alexandria how marvellously rapid was the process of transformation which was wrought in Egypt by the Arabs; but while the exterminating powers of Islam wreaked themselves in their utmost horror on the Greek city, the Arab nature found in Fostât an appropriate opening for the development of its innate creative spirit, and for resuscitating from a heap of ruins a vitality full of vigour, variety, and significance, destined to enrich the world with the fairest fruits.

This is not the place for following the vicissitudes of the history of the Khalifs, nor for relating how, after Omar's death and the murder of Othman and



MORNING PRAYER OF A BEDAWEEN.

of Merwan II., the last of the Omayyades, Egypt, which was ruled by governors, became subject to the Abbasides; but it is worthy of mention that scarcely two hundred years after the founding of Fostât it was behind no city of the East in the distinction and brilliancy of its scientific position. Haroun-er-Rasheed's second successor, his learned son Mamoon (who died A.D. 833), visited Egypt and the city founded by Amroo, in which, during his reign, astronomy, to which he delighted to devote himself, jurisprudence, in connection with theology, natural science, grammar, and philosophy, were cultivated and taught in a celebrated school or academy; as were more particularly those sciences whose Arabic names have not been supplanted

[1] A name of the later Egyptians derived—written in Greek letters—from the Greek word *Aiguptios*—"Egyptian." There were four dialects, the Coptic, the Memphitic spoken at Memphis, the Theban or Sahidic, and the Bashmuric, a later dialect. Manuscripts in the Sahidic are as old as the third century A.D.; the Memphitic do not appear till the tenth century A.D. The language ceased to be spoken more than two centuries ago, but is still used in the ritual and services of the church.

by others even in our day—Algebra and Chemistry. It was under Mamoon that the first terrestrial meridian was measured, and instruments previously unknown were used in the observatory erected by him. Also it is to the translations made in his time of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew books into the Arabic tongue that we owe the preservation of many writings of the ancients which would otherwise have been lost.

The same prince restored the Nilometer on the island of Roda, and decorated it with inscriptions which still exist. Under him Fostât enjoyed a period of fairest bloom; nevertheless, it was under the rule of a viceroy of the later Abbasides—the enterprising and talented Ahmed-ibn-Tuloon[1]—that the town first overstepped the limits of what we know now as Old Cairo. The father of this remarkable man, a Turk by birth, had found admission as a prisoner of war into the body-guard of the Khalif, which at that time constituted a Prætorian guard that succeeded on more than one occasion in breaking a sceptre and disposing of a crown. This talented man soon won a high position in the monarch's palace. His manly and noble-minded son, who had, too, a great taste for science, was appointed to the government of Egypt, and he not only knew how to maintain this by his wisdom, and by the force of arms and gold, but he made a victorious incursion into Syria, and founded an independent sovereignty for himself and his family. He enlarged Fostât, his capital—where he had resided at first in the palace built in the soldiers' quarter by his predecessors—by extending it in the direction of the present citadel, and by building the quarter called el-Khateeyah, where he erected for himself a splendid castle, and afterwards the mosque which to this day bears his name; he meanwhile had founded several richly endowed benevolent institutions, where every Friday he visited in person the sick and insane, besides causing many other useful buildings to be executed, among which the conduits especially deserve mention. The mosque is situated south-west of the citadel (which was not built till afterwards) and halfway between it and Old Cairo, not far from the spacious riding-course where the Arab grandees trained and exercised their splendid horses on the fortified hill called Kal'at el-Kebsh—"the fort of the ram." This was invested by legends with a peculiar sanctity; one of these relates that Abraham led his son to the slaughter on it, and that it then took its name in memory of the ram which was substituted for sacrifice by the Lord God. Other Cairenes declare that at the end of the flood Noah's Ark was stranded on this hill, and that a ram came out of it first of all the beasts; while earlier tales say that Ahmed found the remains of the Ark on Mount Ararat in Armenia, and that it was built into the new mosque in the form

ALLEY OF THE OLD TIME.

[1] A.D. 870.

ARABIAN HORSE.

of a frieze, on which the whole of the Koran was engraved. Very possibly Ahmed-ibn-Tuloon, as the head of a new princely race, assumed—in Oriental fashion—the name of "the ram," *i.e.*, the leader of the flock, and the name el-Kebsh—"the ram"—may refer to him.

ARCH ORNAMENT FROM THE MOSQUE OF IBN-TULOON.

This benevolent prince—who, when he felt death near,[1] desired that the Mohammedans should pray for him with the Koran, the Jews with the Pentateuch and Psalms, and the Christians with the Gospels, all on the top of Mokattam—when he had decided on building a new mosque, scorned to strip any of the more ancient structures in order to decorate his pious work. When he could find no right way—so runs the legend—of building a magnificent temple out of nothing but new materials, the Greek architect who had constructed the aqueducts under his orders, and who had been thrown into prison on a false accusation, let him know that he had conceived of the plan of a magnificent mosque, for which no pillars should be required other than those which would need to be placed on each side of the prayer-niche.

The Greek architect's drawing satisfied the prince's requirements, and thus the beautiful structure rose which, in spite of the many injuries it has suffered, has hitherto fulfilled the desire of its owner—that, even if fire or water should destroy Fostât, it might remain standing.

This structure differs but little in its ground-plan from the Mosque of Amroo, and is generally regarded as especially typical of the earliest period of Arab architecture. The rectangular court is enclosed by side-courts on three sides, and their flat wooden roofs are supported on pillars, and not on columns as in the Mosque of Amroo, and on heavy pointed arches, of which the spring recalls the horse-shoe arch. On the side facing towards Mecca, where the prayer-niche is placed, there are five rows, on the others only two. At the four angles of each square pillar are small columns with Byzantine capitals in gypsum. Coste and, after him, Von Kremer consider these peculiar features as the prototype of the cluster-pillars in our Gothic cathedrals. We do not even yet meet with arabesque decorations or with stalactite ornaments over the doorway in this noble building; but the capitals of the columns, the borders and spandrils of the arches are richly ornamented

[1] The revenues of Egypt were at this time very great; according to De Guignes (*Histoire des Huns*) 300,000,000 pieces of gold. At the death of Tuloon, about £12,000,000 were in his treasury, after £1,200,000 had been abstracted four years before by his son Abbas.

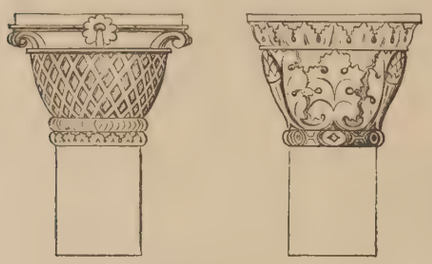
with truly Arabic and most beautiful foliage carving, which, however, still reminds us of its Byzantine prototype. The characters of the Kufic type, in which the verses from the Koran are inscribed, run off into branches and flowers, which might be regarded as of the nature of arabesque; they serve as a rich string-course ornament on the walls close under the roof. Even the latticed windows in the upper part of the wall have borders of foliage, and specially worthy of notice is the upper portion of the walls, which consist of burnt bricks and are

THE LIWAN OR SANCTUARY OF THE MOSQUE OF IBN-TULOON.

covered with a facing of alabaster. This forms a sort of fancifully designed pierced battlement, which has unfortunately suffered severe injury. In the sanctuary, on each side of the prayer-niche, stands a Byzantine pillar. The Mimbar is covered with very fine work in geometrical inlaying of walnut wood and ivory, but it was not erected in the mosque until its restoration under the Bahritic Mamelukes. In the midst of the court rises a domed structure, originally intended as the tomb of Ibn-Tuloon, but under which the tank for the prescribed ablutions does at present stand.

Strong external walls enclose this splendid building on the west, north, and south, to keep out the hubbub of the city, but in the course of time it has suffered severely and undergone cruel disfigurement. It is difficult, at the present

day, for the visitor to form any idea of the grand effect it must have produced at the time of its first completion, for almost all of the arches have been walled up, and the arcades subdivided into cells, which afford a refuge to beggars who torment the visitor, and to Cairenes past work. Badly whitewashed walls with square windows and doors now enclose the court in place of the open pillared arcades. Nothing is left to remind us of the former splendour of the building but the frieze and its injured cornice, the niches and rosettes between the walled-up arches, and the Liwan, or sanctuary, which has been spared and left open. Close to the western outer wall of the mosque rises the quite peculiar minaret. The tower rests on a massive quadrangular substructure, and rises in three stories, each smaller than the last; the lowest is circular in plan, the second and third polygonal. The small cupola has lost its summit, but we know that instead of a crescent it was crowned with a little ship, in which it was the custom to place food for the kites that soar round the mosque.



CAPITALS OF COLUMNS FROM THE MOSQUE OF IBN-TULOON.

Quite peculiar, too, to this minaret is the flight of steps going round it outside, by which the muezzins mount from balcony to balcony. It is said that once Ibn-Tuloon, sitting in council, became quite absorbed in thought, wrapping a strip of paper spirally round his finger; when he roused himself to consciousness and met the enquiring looks of his officials, he excused himself by explaining that the twisted strip of paper was the model of the staircase of the minaret he was building. The whole edifice was completed in two years, and it seemed to the Cairenes so extravagantly costly that they complained at the enormous sum disbursed for it, so that Ibn-Tuloon was forced to declare that he had found a treasure, to which he owed the means of erecting his mosque. It was said that he had three times come upon enormous buried wealth, and, in fact, the sums laid out by him for public purposes were immense; although at the same time he reduced the imposts, and on a second occasion mitigated them, because in a dream he heard the voice of a friend saying to him, "When a prince sacrifices his rights for the best interests of his people, God takes it on Himself to make it up to him."

Ahmed-ibn-Tuloon is one of the noblest figures in Oriental history. When he died, in May A.D. 884, in spite of the many wars he had engaged in, and his indomitable energy in building, which had extended even to fortifying the island of Roda, he left behind him an enormous treasure, which, according to our modern English computation, is said to have amounted to sixty millions; he was sincerely lamented by his innumerable subjects in both Syria and Egypt. The dynasty founded by him was to all extents and purposes independent, although the prosperity of the Abbasides continued to be prayed for in the mosques of Fostât; and seventeen sons and sixteen daughters who survived him—for he had an extensive harem—seemed to promise long continuance to the new family of Regents. And yet within twenty-two years of the death of its founder it was extinct. The power of the Abbaside Khalifs dwindled to nothing at the same time. The last rulers of

Egypt who acknowledged their supremacy, before the rising of the Fatimites, were the Turk Mohammed-el-Ihsheed and, last of all, his black slave Kafoor, who, after serving his lord and his two sons, who were minors, with conspicuous fidelity, undertook in his own person the government of the Nile valley—which was at that time under a visitation of famine, war, and pestilence—till he died, in the year 967 of our era, greatly lamented by the poets,[1] to whom he had been a liberal patron. He was succeeded by the grandson of his former lord, Mohammed-el-Ihsheed: this boy was only eleven years old, and his relatives took advantage of his youthful inexperience to snatch from him his rich inheritance.

PATTERN OF THE MIMBAR IN THE MOSQUE OF IBN-TULOON.

At this period of its utmost misery Egypt was certain to fall like a ripe fruit into the first strong hand stretched out to grasp it, and this strong hand was not long to wait for.

A few decades before, a bold man, Obeyd-Allah — who called himself, whether rightly or no, a descendant of Alee, the prophet's son-in-law, by his daughter Fatima—had founded a new Shiite dynasty called the Fatimites,[2] in Northern Africa. Under the title of a Mehdee—meaning "one who is under the special guidance of God"—he founded, on a peninsula which juts out into the bay of Tunis, the splendid capital of Mahadeeyah, which is now utterly destroyed, and after many wars he and his successors brought the greater portion of North Africa, Sicily, and Sardinia under their dominion. Obeyd-Allah's son Kasoon was even bold enough to attack Egypt, and he actually succeeded in reaching Alexandria and in conquering the Fayoom; but it was not until fifty-five years later that his great grandson Mo'izz, encouraged by Egyptian emirs, ventured to attempt to subjugate the whole valley of the Nile. In February A.D. 969,[3] he sent his general Djawhar with a picked army to invade the country lying to the east. A battle was fought at Ghizeh, the adherents of the dynasty of Ihsheed were routed, and the victorious Djawhar crossed the Nile and encamped to the north of Fostât on the spot where modern Cairo, which he subsequently founded, was destined to rise.

[1] Also the musicians, who were much enriched by his favours and donations. The musical art was much prized at the period. A considerable volume existed with the names of the poets and their works, but all their poems have disappeared.

[2] Consisted of eleven sovereigns who reigned one hundred and eighty-eight years.

[3] Towards the end of the reign of Kafoor.

THE CONSORT OF THE SULTAN

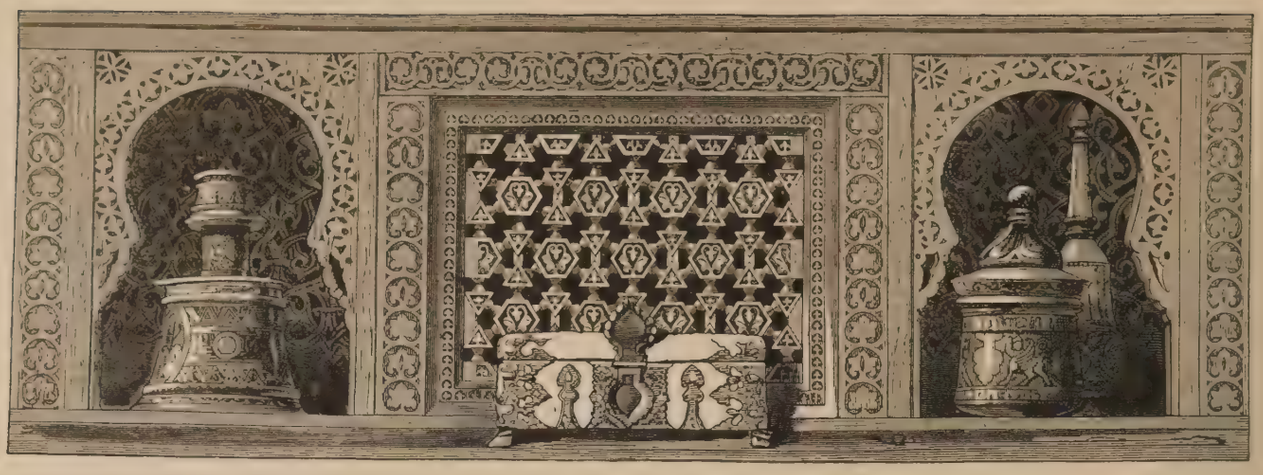
AHMED.

A few months after his entry into Fostât, Djawhar gave orders to add to the city on the northern side by the building of a new town. This adjoined the quarter of el-Khateeyeh founded by Ibn-Tuloon, and was to serve, in the first instance, as head-quarters for Djawhar's soldiers, and as the court residence of the Fatimite Khalifs. The first sod was to be turned, by the advice of the astrologers, at the moment when the planet Mars—known to the Arabs as el-Kahir, "the victorious" —crossed the meridian of Fostât. According to another legend the circuit of the new city was marked out and surrounded by a string to which little bells were

MINARET AND COURT OF THE MOSQUE OF IBN-TULOON.

attached, so that at a signal to be given by them the labourers might all begin together. But before the architect who awaited the word of the astrologers could sound the signal, a bird of prey shot down on to the string, the little bells rang out all round, the labourers set to work, and, it is said, at the very instant at which the planet crossed the meridian of the new town. This in consequence took its name from it, Masr-el-Kahira—*i.e.*, the Victorious of Egypt.

A star of conquest had presided over the founding of the new town, and Djawhar lighted up in it a new luminary which guided him to victory in the arena of intellectual conflict; for his first act was to found the University and mosque of el-Azhar, which to this day may be regarded as the source and centre of all scientific life in the East.



CAIRO;

UNDER THE FATIMITES AND EYOOBIDES.

VARIOUS have been the changes that have passed over the city since that period of early development which we have traced so far. We now stand on the threshold of the most splendid section of its history, and we feel tempted to interrupt the course of events to do honour to the University and mosque of el-Azhar, and to record their achievements. It must be regarded as having been from the time of its foundation by Djawhar, the general of the army under Mo'izz, down to the present day the source from which all the intellectual and religious life of Cairo has for centuries derived its nourishment—from whence, indeed, it still derives it—and it deserves to be considered as the very heart and brain of the City of the Khalifs. But for the present we must pass by its lofty gates, and postpone visiting it till we can do so without interrupting the course of the historical narrative. I will then resign the reader into the care of a guide to whom this famous institution is familiar, and who will make him acquainted with its organisation and results. Here it need only be said that Djawhar himself built and furnished it magnificently, and secured the salaries of the professors and the maintenance of students by munificent endowments.

Soon after the founding of Cairo the Khalif Mo'izz[2] transferred the royal

[1] A.D. 970.

[2] A.D. 972; his treasures and expenditure were enormous. Makreezee, pp. 385—488.

residence to the new city in which, only three years after, he was borne to the grave of his forefathers, whose bodies had been conveyed to Egypt. The country and the capital alike owed great things to his immediate successors. They governed their kingdom, which already extended to the western confines of Africa, with solicitude and wisdom, opening out new channels for the commerce of Egypt, even as far as India and deep into the heart of the African continent. The caravans which travelled from Tangier—which bordered on the Moorish dependencies of Spain—and traversed the greater portion of Northern Africa *viâ* Kayrawan and Tripolis, conveyed merchandise of enormous value, which they poured into the Khans of Cairo, fast rising to be the most important capital of the East; and

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN VASES.

from thence other files of camels kept up constant intercourse between Syria and Egypt. Aydab and Klysma on the Red Sea were the ports where goods conveyed by sea were shipped and unshipped.

The artistic industry of the Arabs also found ample opportunity for display under the Fatimites, who loved to live in richly fitted palaces, and whose ministers and richer subjects, imitating their princes, built magnificent dwelling-houses.

In the fifth soorah of the Koran, wine, gambling, statues, and drawing lots are forbidden as an abomination to the faithful; hence neither painting nor sculpture could ever rise to a high eminence among the Arabs, or even assert their dignity as independent arts; nevertheless, the prohibition of the Prophet was disregarded, particularly in Cairo under the Fatimites, and we are told that in their time the most splendid tapestries were in use, on which were representations of the sovereigns and of celebrated men; and that in the capital itself there were manufactories of artistic vessels and materials of every description. A variety of table ornaments were produced there, and the elegant figures from Cairo were highly esteemed, particularly gazelles and lions, elephants and giraffes. Certain vessels of glazed clay, regarded as unique, bore the forms of human figures, or of animals. Similar vessels were not unknown to the ancient Egyptians; but the painters who worked

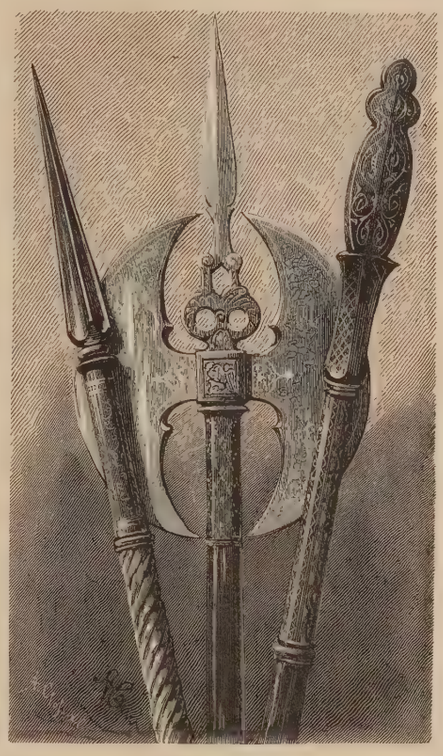
HAREM OF A HOUSE IN THE TIME OF THE KHALIFS.

in the service of the Fatimites appear to have immeasurably surpassed the artists of Pharaonic times, who were never able to attain to any freedom of treatment, and to whom the laws of perspective remained unknown. For how should an artist of Old Memphis or Thebes have so succeeded in painting dancing women

ABOO BEKR. OMAR. OTHMAN. ALEE.

EGYPTIAN COINS.

that some should seem to float out from the wall, and others to recede? And Makreezee asserts that both were accomplished under the Fatimites by Ibn-Azeez and Koseyr during a banquet in Cairo. We are also told of portraits of distinguished poets executed at the same period, and of a picture representing Joseph in the well, which, by its fine effects of colour, excited the highest admiration. Even the workshops of the sculptors sent out not merely fantastic ornaments and designs of animals, but human figures, and among them armed knights on horseback.



HALBERD AND SPEAR FOR LION HUNTING, OF STEEL INLAID WITH SILVER. TIME OF THE FATIMITES.

At an early date the Arabs had exchanged their primitive modest garb for the gorgeous clothing used by the nations they had subjugated, and more particularly by the Persians. At the court of the Khalifs at Bagdad an enormous use was made of embroidered dresses of the rarest materials. The Fatimites sought to vie with the Abbasides in this respect, and several establishments were founded in Cairo for the production of embroidery on silk, which was largely used for turbans worked with gold, for mantles of honour with the monograms of the names of sovereigns (tiraz), and ladies' robes with inscriptions. The robes of honour embroidered with the tiraz played so conspicuous a part under the successors of Mo'izz that the "Intendant of the Tiraz" held one of the most distinguished posts in the court. Very costly work was also produced by the goldsmiths and armourers, and the former worked not for ladies only but for men also, for both sexes were fond of decorating themselves with necklaces and bracelets. We are told of ladies who so loaded themselves with ornaments of gold and precious stones that they could not walk without assistance. The

men expended large sums on the decoration of their arms; and the interior of their houses, as well as their persons, were decked with every product of the industrial arts of the period. The walls were lined with polished stucco in various colours, with arabesques or richly embroidered stuffs, or even with tiles in pottery with an enamel facing of inimitable brilliancy; the floor was of mosaic or was covered with thick carpets. A carpet made in the reign[1] of Mo'izz represented the chief cities of the world, and under the pictures were explanatory sentences in letters of gold and silver. This carpet is said to have cost 22,000 dinars (about £12,000). The cabinet-makers had preserved their early art of inlaying furniture, using costly dark wood inlaid with lighter ones, or with ivory and mother-of-pearl, and at no period were the coverings for pillows and cushions more richly designed or more beautifully coloured than those of the Egyptian damask at that date.[2]

ARABIC SILK DAMASK OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY. FROM A GARMENT OF HENRY THE SAINT (A.D. 1002—24) IN BAMBERG GERMAN MUSEUM.

The costly stuffs of Damietta have already been spoken of; figures of various animals were woven into these. The heavy stuff known as Deebak brocade, with its large patterns of flowers, is still to be met with in the high-mass robes of Catholic priests. The Christian Copts were the best weavers both in the Delta and at Syoot in Upper Egypt, which produced a particular purplish-red furniture stuff. Even quite simple vessels of clay and brass showed very elegant forms, and were decorated with rich Tawsheer work; nor was less care bestowed on the ewers and bowls used for washing the hands at meals, on the lanterns for lighting the courts and halls, on the plates, saucers, and vases, the boxes, jars, and bowls (khordâdhee) used for the lavish burning of essences—in which the Prophet himself had indulged—and for containing sweetmeats, preserved fruits, syrup, and sherbets, which the Cairenes to this day prepare in great and excellent variety. The joys of the table even inspired the poets to sing of them, and many an old traveller celebrates the praises of the multitude of cooks and roasters who set up their stalls and fires at the corners of the streets, or carried them about

ARABIC STUFF. PRESERVED IN THE GERMAN MUSEUM OF NUREMBERG. DARK-RED GROUND AND GREY FOLIAGE, THE OUTLINES CHANGING BLUE AND GOLD.

[1] A.D. 968—977. [2] A.D. 968—977.

on their heads. Old Sebastian Frank[1] tells us, "There be there [in Cairo] as many as fifteen thousand public kitchens, wherein every day, and all day, they cook victuals and dainties, both roast and boiled; for the natives cook but little in their houses, but many cooks go round about in the city with fire ready prepared on a hearth, which they carry on their heads, and they will boil or roast meat therewith; and if any man have need they take down the oven from their head and give to the hungry according to his desire for a reasonable sum of money." At the present day cooks are to be seen at many street-corners, and wandering provision-merchants in great numbers. A writer of the time of Saladin[2] declares that if he were called upon to enumerate and describe the various sweetmeats prepared in Egypt a separate book would require to be written. A large pasty, of which the preparation is minutely described by this author, proves the luxury of living indulged in by the princes and grandees of his time. First a dough is prepared of thirty pounds of the finest meal, kneaded up with five and a half pounds of sesame oil; this was to be divided into two portions. One, rolled thin, was laid in a large copper pan with strong handles, prepared for the purpose. On this was spread a minced stuffing of meat, and above it thirty lambs, roast and stuffed with a fine spiced *farcis* of pounded pistachio nuts, pepper, ginger, cinnamon, mastic, coriander, carraway, and nuts. Over this was poured rose-water flavoured with nutmeg. On and between the lambs were packed twenty fowls, an equal number of young chickens, and fifty small birds, some stuffed with meat and some with eggs, some roasted in grape juice or lemon juice. This mass (may we not write "mess") was garnished with little meat patties and tarts full of sugar-work. When it had acquired a dome-shape—and pieces of meat or toasted cheese

WIFE OF THE SHEYKH OF THE COOKS.

[1] "Chronique et Tableau de la Turquie," 4to, 1550.

[2] A.D. 1171—1192.

might still be added—Attar of rose with essence of nutmeg, or of aloes wood, was to be poured over it; it was then covered with the other half of the dough, care being taken that it so effectually enclosed the contents that no steam should find even the smallest outlet, and the dish was put into the oven. When the crust was well baked, and of a delicate ruddy hue, the pasty was withdrawn from the oven, wiped with a sponge, and again moistened with rose-water and nutmeg. This dish was considered particularly suitable for being taken on hunting and country expeditions by the king or great personages, since it contained a variety of viands, was easily portable, did not fall to pieces easily, looked handsome, tasted well, and was very slow in cooling.

Though Persia, and at a later day Andalusia, yielded the finest Attar of rose, Bassorah the famous palm-flower oil, Armenia the most costly essence of willow, and Koofah the finest essence of stock gilly-flower and violet, the lily oil of Egypt was especially prized; but the choicest spices and the finest incense were brought from the Somali coast in the time of the Khalifs as they had been under the Pharaohs. The consumption of essences must have been enormous at the highest tide of Egyptian splendour, for the people were actually enjoined to perfume themselves on Fridays, corpses were anointed with aromatic essences; sherbets and sweetmeats were flavoured with fine vegetable extracts, perfumes filled the air in every well-to-do house, and saturated the letters and presents which were constantly being exchanged. The ladies bathed in perfumed water, the men used scented oils for the hair, and both made use of red, yellow, and green soap. During great festivals incense was burnt in all the streets, so that even the poorest might be regaled by the mere act of breathing. Nor was there any lack of narcotics. The mode of preparing opium, introduced from Syoot in Upper Egypt, was well known, and the Sultan Beybars[1] promulgated several edicts prohibiting the use of Hasheesh, a stupefying and intoxicating preparation of Indian hemp. In spite of the Prophet's prohibition the juice of the grape continued to be indulged in; alcohol (as its name indicates) is an Arab discovery, and beer—the favourite beverage of the ancient Egyptians—was also brewed and drunk under the Khalifs. Many a jovial song in praise of wine was sung by Arab poets, and in early times many Arabs would by no means admit that the Prophet had forbidden its use. In an old MS. copy of Tha'âlibi[2] it is said, "The Prophet—may God bless him and accept him—permitted wine, and mercifully allows us to strengthen ourselves with it at our meals, and to lift the veil of our cares and sorrows." In another place it is written, "None forbids wine but a churl, and none allows it but a noble soul; the free-handed and the generous praise it, the avaricious and niggardly find fault with it. But shun drunkenness, it is a disgrace and a sin." Wine is called "the alchemy of joy, and the pleasantest thing the world rejoices in." In the "Cheerer" it is said, "the world is as one beloved, and wine is the dew of her lip."

Ibn-el-Mu'tazz sang:[3]—

> "Care not if time passes slowly or hurries thee onward;
> Whisper thy woes to the wine cup that bubbles before thee.

[1] A.D. 1277. [2] Died about A.D. 1043, in the reign of the Khalif Mostansir-Billah. [3] A.D. 807.

PRINCELY GARDEN IN CAIRO.

Yet, if three times thou hast emptied it pause and consider;
Guard thou thy heart lest joy vanish and leave only torment.
Here is the proved panacea for sadness and sorrow;
Hearken thou then to my counsel who knows what will serve thee,
Care not for time, but bethink thee how often the wretched
Fain would amend all its evils—alas! but he cannot."

Other poets who have sung of wine praise it with gay freedom and without restraint. The drinker sings triumphantly as he raises his glass—

"Drink, or e'er this life be past
Drain the goblet to the last."

A great deal of wine must have been drunk in Egypt, if it is correctly stated that the wine-tax in one day amounted to more than a thousand dinars (almost £600). The Christian monks seem to have kept the best cellars of the noble juice, and the poet Ibn Hamdees[1] gives a ravishing picture of a night he spent in drinking with some friends in a convent in Sicily, his native home. There was fine muscatel there indeed, and a piece of silver purchased "liquid gold."

The princes and potentates in their palaces feasted off the precious metals, and even off plates of onyx and the other less precious gem stones. Knife and spoon handles of jasper and carnelian, and vessels of rock-crystal were not very rare. Glass, both clear and coloured, was used in a variety of forms.

The outside of the house that faced on the street was just as simple as the interior was splendid—particularly the "mandaree," or room for receiving visitors, and the harem, or women's apartments—for suspicion and jealousy, as well as fear of the greed of princes and of the envious gaze of the passer-by, prescribed concealment of the wealth of the household, especially under the later sovereigns.

The Arabs excelled all other nations in horticulture, and particular care was bestowed on the gardens, which are praised alike by poets and prose writers. Among the latter is Aboo Bekr el-Herawee, the traveller who is known to the Arabs as Kiselak,[2] because he inscribed his name on innumerable monuments; he enumerates the following plants, which he had seen all at the same season in Egyptian gardens:—Roses of three different colours, two sorts of jasmine, and two of lotus, myrtle, jonquils, chrysanthemums, white and scented violets, stock gilly-flower, levkoja (snow flake), iris, lemon, palms with ripe and unripe fruit, bananas, sycamores, vines with sour and sweet grapes, fig and almond trees, coriander, melons, cucumbers, and a variety of other vegetables, among which the famous Egyptian asparagus is mentioned in the earliest antiquity. Another writer, speaking of the Khalif's garden, says that it contained—besides many other splendid plants to be met with in our gardens—palms of which the trunks were covered with plates of gold, which hid pipes out of which water spouted, so that it seemed to shoot up from the palm-tree itself. Flowers thickly sown were made, by training and clipping, to form figures and inscriptions, and in cool pavilions springs spouted out from the wall, and baskets were fastened up in which rare birds built their

[1] A.D. 1251. A Sicilian, died in the Island of Majorca, A.D. 1132.

[2] A.D. 1627.

nests; peacocks and other birds of fine plumage ornamented the terraces. Many cultivated plants have made their way, by the intervention of the Arabs, from the East to the West, and were improved by them. The fairyland of Oriental tales cannot be conceived of without its gardens. In them alone may even the blue heavens find permission to gaze down on the unveiled beauties of the harem; thus it was in the garden that love tied its forbidden bonds, while high walls shut it in from the sight of the passer-by.

GARDEN ON THE ROAD TO HELIOPOLIS.

Even the mosques—richly as they were furnished and decorated within—were comparatively plain on the exterior. It was only on the chief gateway, in the friezes, the minarets, and the beautifully ornamented casing of the cupolas that the decorative arts of architect and sculptor could display themselves; while, so early as at the time of the Fatimites, they had understood the application of the arabesques and inscriptions, which had long been used as patterns for weaving, to the walls of the palaces and mosques. These delightful surface decorations served at once to please the imagination and satisfy artistic feeling, and to arouse sentiments of devotion and a thirst for learning. Little, alas! has remained to our day of the buildings of that date, but there is no lack of descriptions of the splendour which gradually developed itself under the Fatimite Khalifs, and it may be asserted with perfect confidence that all those features—which are peculiar to Arab architecture, and of which we shall be able to point out fine examples of a later period—reached their full development under this race of sovereigns. This is especially true of the *stalactite ornament*, as it has been called—from a false idea that it was an imitation of those fantastical natural formations which occur, in many varieties, in caverns where the water percolates through the roof. Kugler describes it as a peculiar kind of architectonic structure, of which the striking effect may be attributed to its apparent constructive value, and also to its organic (in the ideal sense) and fanciful character as a decoration. It occurs as a transition or interposed ornament supporting overhanging members of the edifice: for instance, as filling up the internal angles where a cupola rises above a quadrangular space; and in various other instances it is used in certain places as a substitute for a complete

arch and vault. It is an artificial system of projecting parts in which small brackets alternate with little niches with pointed arches, in such a way that the base of each super-imposed bracket is over the centre of the niche below, and often so that the upper projections hang over like a fir-cone. The constructive rationale of the stalactite is an idea of support and thrust upwards, and Schmoranz, one of the most accomplished connoisseurs in Arab art, distinguishes three varieties, the Arab, Persian, and Mauresque. Each of these displays certain peculiarities, partly resulting from the character of the materials to which they are applied—wood, alabaster, terra-cotta, or stone. The uncoloured stalactites intended for mere effects of shadow are, of course, differently treated to the many-coloured painted ones.

CONSOLE OF THE BALCONY OF THE MINARET OF THE MOSQUE OF EZBEK.

The palace built for his sovereign by Djawhar the Victorious has entirely disappeared; but a poetical description has been preserved of another structure of that period, the castle of the princes al-Mansoor, at Bugia in Algiers, which was sung of by the afore-mentioned poet Ibn Hamdees. The following prose version is from the German of Count von Schack :—

PERSO-TURKISH STALACTITE CAPITAL.

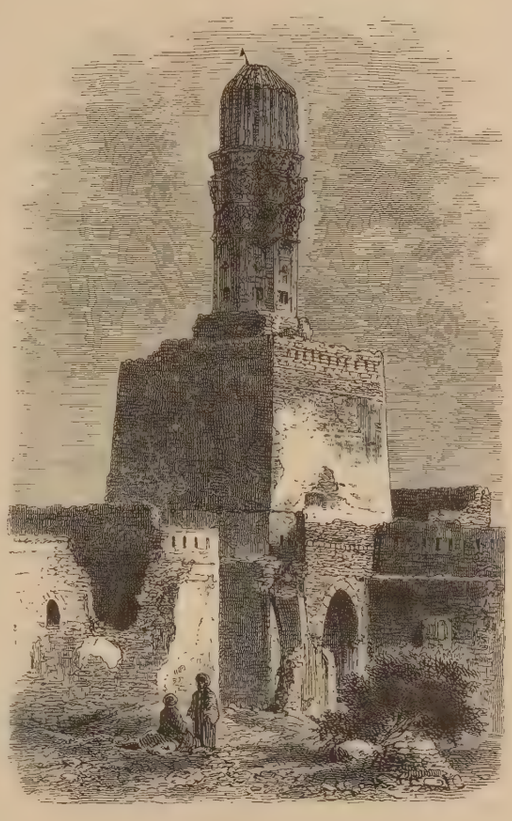
"Century on century have passed over Greece and have given birth to no palace so splendid as this. O Mighty One, we are made to understand the joys of Eden in these halls, with their lofty roofs and this cool delicious court-yard. The sight of them prompts the believer to deeds of virtue, for gardens as fair as these may be his home above; and even the sinner looking round him leaves the path of error, repenting of his former sins, to deserve the joys of Heaven. When the slaves open the gates the very hinges murmur a welcome to those who enter. The lions before the gate, which bite brazen rings, lift up their voices to say Allah is almighty. They seem ready to spring and tear the intruder who enters the court without being bidden. Like woven carpets dusted over with fine camphor are the marble pavements of the court. Pearls are inlaid all round, and far and wide the earth fills the air with perfume, as if it were pure musk. When the sun sets and darkness reigns, this castle might serve instead of it and make the night as clear as day."

The poet also praises the fountain of the same palace; it was surrounded by lions, from whose mouths the water poured into a basin, and as it rushed forth from their jaws it made a noise as loud "as though it were their roar." In the midst of the basin stood a tree of metal with birds in the branches, and threads of water that played in the sun poured from their little beaks; moisture dropped also from the leaves of the tree. Ibn Hamdees devotes a poem even to the gates and to the ceiling of this palace. The gates were ornamented with the precious metals and with carving, and studded with gold nails. On the ceiling

there were pictures of blooming gardens and hunting-scenes. The painter of these was highly lauded—

> "'Twould seem he dipped his paint-brush in the sun's refulgent beam
> To give the scene the splendour and the glamour of a dream."

The most important structure of the Fatimite period now remaining in Cairo is the mosque which was erected by the grandson and second successor of Mo'izz.[1] It is true it is half-ruined, and offers little worthy of remark to the visitor; but he who knows the story of the life of its founder, Hakim, must admit that this Khalif, who came to the throne when only eleven years old, is one of the most remarkable figures in history—one of the most singular and, by reason of the strange contradictions combined in his character, one of the most incomprehensible. To this day the sect of the Druses living in Syria regard him as an incarnation of the Most High—he himself, in his later years, believed himself to be God—and they believe that he disappeared only to come again and to receive the homage of the whole world. The development of Cairo owed but little to him, and the different classes of its inhabitants met with the most various treatment at his hands, according to the mood he was in. The Jews and the Christian Copts suffered most, and yet at times he would grant them the utmost freedom, and even permit such of them as had gone over to Islam to return to the exercise of their old religion. The lowest classes, among whom in his youth he was wont to pray, and whom he won over by his ever open hand, were devoted to him, while he was dreaded by the great. In the harems of the wealthy his very name was a word of fear, for no woman was allowed to leave her house, nor were the purveyors of provisions even permitted to cross its threshold. Magnanimity and meanness, mad severity and gentle kindness, affability and haughtiness amounting to the most frightful and blasphemous mania, a stern and utterly intolerant devotion to the doctrines of the Shiite sect and complete subjection to the religion of his fathers—all these conflicting elements and moods ruled alternately in the storm-tossed soul of this strangely compounded man; sometimes he would ride through the streets of the city in pomp with a large suite, at others alone, on an ass; for half the week he would sit in rooms artificially darkened, where candles and lamps took the



THE MOSQUE OF EL HAKIM.

[1] A.D. 996.

place of sunshine; and once, like a second Nero, he had his palace set on fire. At last, in one of his nocturnal expeditions on Mokattam, he disappeared, leaving no trace. Probably he was murdered; but the Druses, as I have said, to this day look for his return to earth. He built three places of worship, but the mosque named after him and praised as an admirable work was destroyed by an earthquake. A stately structure with a ruined minaret that is but little injured—used in his time as an observatory—is now supported by the north-east portion of the city wall. It stands between the two most conspicuous gates in Cairo, the Bab en-Nasr—or "gate of victory"—and the Bab el-Footooh, which were built in the reign of the second sovereign from Hakim, the magnificent but feeble el-Mustansir, by his Wezeer Bedr el-Gamalee. The Bab en-Nasr is an important structure of the best period of Arab art, and the solidity and accurate squaring of the stones are justly admired by experts. The Bab el-Footooh with its circular forts, well constructed and well preserved, deserves equal praise.

The traveller who, in his walk round this suburb, comes towards these gates and the mosque of Hakim will see, on his left, a little cemetery where J. L. Burckhardt—the finest writer of travels of any period—rests among the Moslems whose country and customs he studied and described.

It is highly significant that it is not the Khalif who is commemorated as the builder of these two portals, but in both cases his Wezeer; and, in fact, after the time of Mustansir,[1] the Wezeers became more and more the rulers of the fate of Cairo, of Egypt, and of the Fatimite race. This dynasty became extinct after eight successors of Hakim had filled the throne, its end being as pitiful as its rise and early career had been splendid. The Egyptian Khalifat met its death-blow under the feeble Adeed,[2] not indeed so much from the first Crusaders—who, under the later Fatimites, made a violent and victorious descent—as in consequence of the avarice and jealousy of the Wezeers, who made war on one another when they ought to have guarded the kingdom. Among them must be mentioned Shawer, who, to consolidate his power, applied for help to Noor-ed-deen, Prince of Aleppo.[3] He thus threw open the road into Egypt to the Kurdish mercenaries of the Syrian, led by Sheerkooh and his young nephew, the famous Salah-ed-deen (Saladin), the son of Eyoob. After many vicissitudes, which culminated in the unprincipled Wezeer appealing to the Crusaders themselves for aid, he was deprived of both office and life by the Kurds.[4] After the death of his uncle Sheerkooh,[5] Saladin took his post, and reigned over Egypt, though at first only nominally and in the name of Adeed—the last of the Fatimites, who lived shut up in his palace with his wives; but even before the death of this prince, which took place shortly after, he governed as the independent Sultan, and he ventured boldly, and with impunity, to have prayers said on the pulpits of Cairo for the Abbaside Khalif, whose faith he shared, being a Sunnite. From him sprang a new dynasty of sovereigns for Egypt, named the House of the Eyoobides,[6] after Eyoob, the father of Saladin.

[1] A.D. 1036—1094. [2] A.D. 1153. [3] Atabeg of Syria.

[4] First mention of employment of carrier pigeons at this time.

[5] Commander-in-chief of Noor-ed-deen. [6] Eight reigns lasting eighty years.

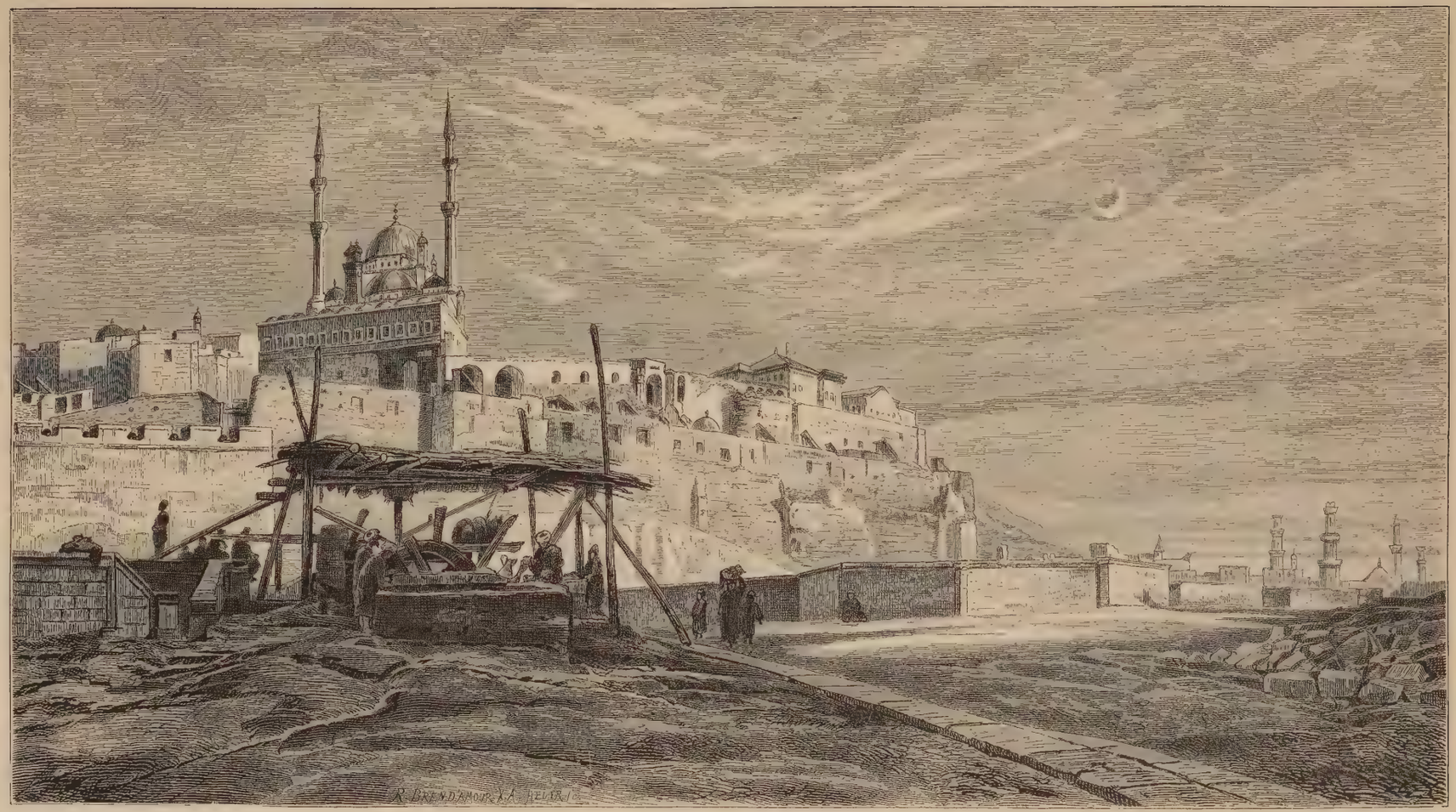
BAB EN-NASR

Saladin's grand deeds of prowess, his chivalrous spirit, his generosity and good-heartedness have survived far more vividly in our Western legends and poems than they have among Orientals. Walter von der Vogelweide[1] rouses us with the appeal "Remember the gentle Sal'adeen," and to him "gentle"[2] conveyed the idea of generous magnanimity, our "true gentle-man." Dante allows him

BAB EL-FOOTOH.

to linger alone in a circle, as the noblest of the heathen—"E solo in parte vid' il Saladino."[3] Lessing and Walter Scott have both done their best to keep Saladin's personal memory green in the mind of Western nations. It was he and his valour that lost Jerusalem to the Crusaders, and nevertheless Christian

[1] Cir. 1260. [2] *Milte*, or "Mild." [3] "Inferno," canto iv., 129.



CITADEL OF CAIRO.

chivalry found in him something akin to itself, and was ready to accept the legend that he was the son of a Christian woman, and that he allowed himself to be dubbed Knight Templar by the captive Hugo of Tiberias, though the Templars were the bitterest foes of his cause. His life is not free from mean traits, but still he was a hero and a true knight: the only one of his creed at that time who could do justice to his enemies, and at the same time a prince—as Lessing has painted him—who was never weary of giving, and in whose treasury, after he had given away many millions, only about forty-five shillings were found at his death. His sister—the Sittah of Lessing's play—was named Sitt' esh-Shameh, and history says of her that at her brother's death she distributed her own treasure in alms, since his coffers were almost empty.

This is not the proper place for following his warlike career; but what he accomplished for Cairo must not remain unmentioned, for it was Saladin who founded and erected the citadel which to this day towers imposingly above the city.[2] If it had been built with no other object than that of maintaining obedience and defending Cairo, the choice of the site could hardly be deemed happy, for it is overtopped by other heights lying farther to the south which again command it. But Saladin wished to fix his residence in the new fortress, and Makreezee tells us that he selected the height of Mokattam—"the pleasure-house of fresh air," as it was called—for his building, because it was observed that meat, which would keep only twenty-four hours in the city, remained fresh two days and nights up on the hill. After the fall of the Fatimites, and the restoration of the Sunnite confession, the greatest dangers threatened Saladin from the Shiite inhabitants. At first he had lived in the castle of the Grand Wezeer, and had given the palace of the Khalifs of the race of Mo'izz to his Emirs, and no spot could be found better suited at this time for the coercion of the Cairenes than that which he selected. The eunuch Karakoosh[3] was entrusted with the construction of the fortress, and the outer walls which were to surround the whole city; and this extraordinary man, who seems to have been half a fool and half a sage, solved the problem set before him by destroying the small pyramids of Ghizeh and the third pyramid—that of Mycerinus—and using them as stone quarries. The finely squared blocks of the Pharaonic period were carried across the Nile, and the work proceeded rapidly, even while the Sultan was absent fighting in Syria, though it was not completed till the reign of his nephew and second successor, Malik el Kâmil.[4]

The memory of Karakoosh, the architect, has remained particularly fresh among the Egyptians. The buffoon[5] who is always conspicuous in every public theatrical exhibition[6] is called by his name, and he appears, in fact, to have merited this fate by many of his acts and dealings. A widow once begged of him to

[1] Nathan der Weise. [2] A.D. 1174

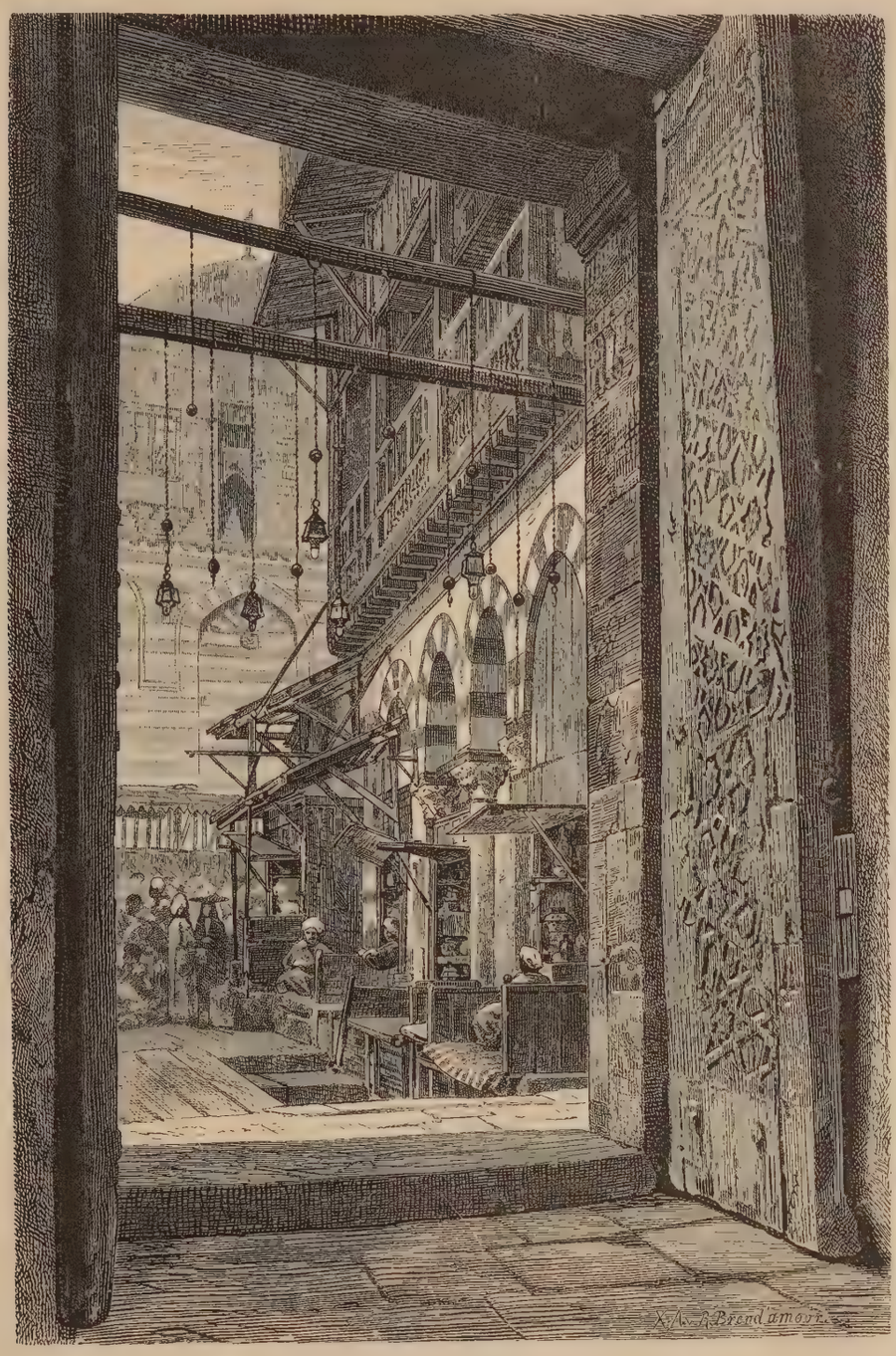
[3] Beha-ed-den. The name *Karakoosh*, meaning "black bird," was given to him as a nickname, probably after new imposts.

[4] About A.D. 1219.

[5] D'Herbelot, in his account of Karakoosh, states a work was written by Soiuthi on his actions.

[6] Supposed by some to be the origin of Karaguse, Karaguez, or Caragheus, the Chinese Punch or Polichinello, exhibited as a kind of *ombre chinoise* by a figure behind a cloth illumined by a lamp from behind. This cynical performance of the Karaguse often embodies political caricatures of the day, and reflects public opinion. Others deny that Karaguse, which means "black snout," is the same as Karakoosh.

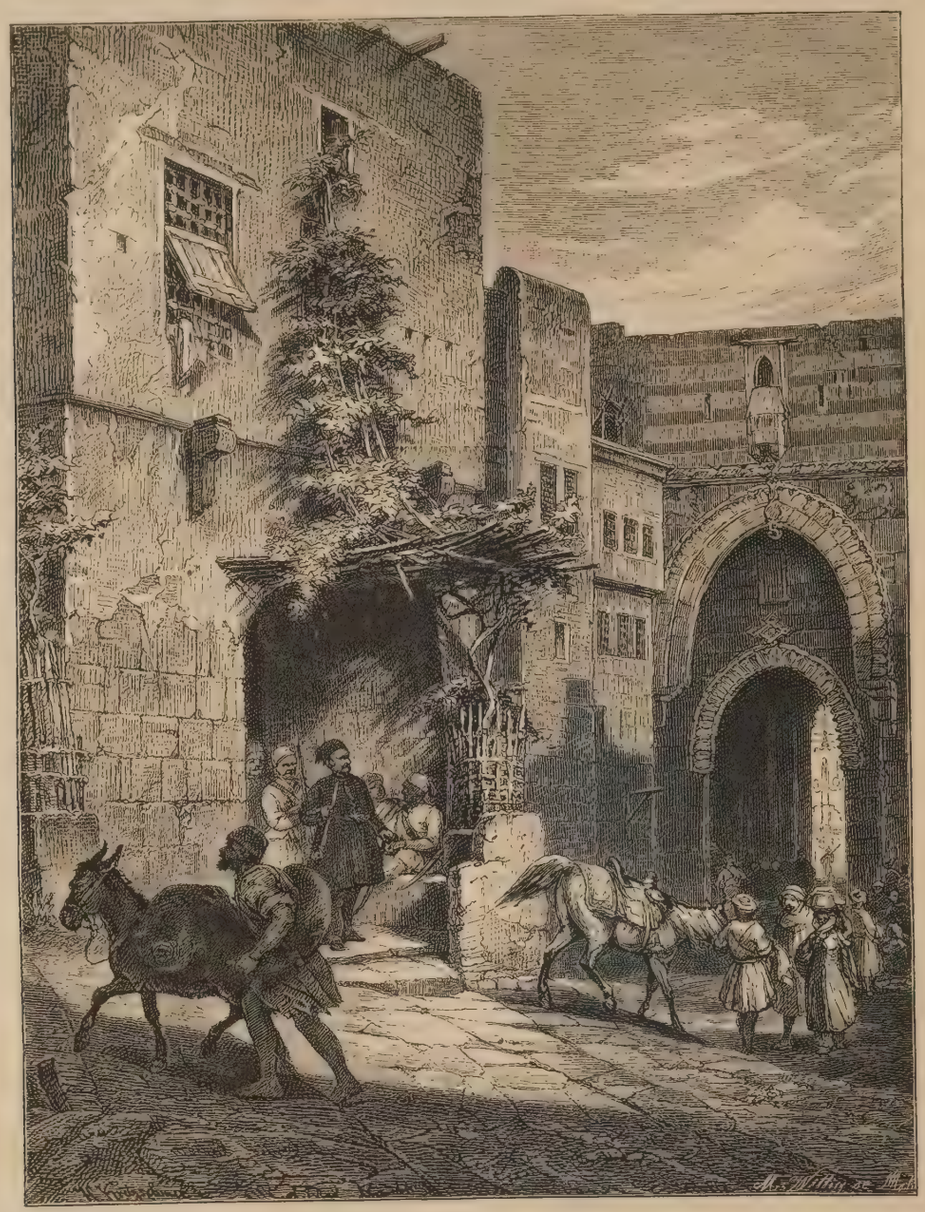
bestow on her a winding-sheet that she might bury her husband who was just dead. Karakoosh replied—"The alms-box is just now empty; come again next year,



DOOR OF THE ALLEY OF SUKKARIJE.

and then, by God's help, I will give you the winding-sheet." The following story, which is related of other persons too, with several variations, is more to his credit. A great robbery was committed in Cairo. Karakoosh enquired of the man who had been robbed whether his street was closed by a gate, as was frequently

the case in early times. Having been answered in the affirmative, he ordered that the gate and the inhabitants of the street should both be brought to him; then, applying his ear to the gate, he said: "This gate tells me that the man who



DOOR OF THE MAMELUKES IN THE CITADEL OF CAIRO.

stole the money has a feather in his turban." The thief involuntarily clutched at his turban and was discovered.

Many other traits of Karakoosh are told which are absolutely barbarous, but the confidence put in him by Saladin would seem to prove that he cannot have been altogether devoid of fine qualities.

The Arabs called the new fortress the "Nile Castle," and the modern Cairenes call it simply 'el-Kal'ah, or "the fort." A winding road, very well kept, now leads

up to the citadel; but the old steep path, shut in by walls, is also kept up, and debouches at the gate called el-Azab, which is also called the Gate of the Mamelukes, because it was close to it that the frightful tragedy was enacted of the massacre of these haughty nobles under Mohammed Ali, as will presently be related.

The palace in which Saladin's successors lived for centuries was subsequently wholly abandoned; a few halls decorated in the Turkish style are re-opened at the present day on occasions of great ceremonial receptions. The finest of the marble pillars were broken away by Seleem, after his conquest of Cairo, in 1517, and sent to Stamboul with the most valuable of the other decorative objects and furniture. It would have been very difficult to form any idea of the appearance of an Arab castle, or of the life within its walls, if the following account of the reception of the Crusaders' envoys at the palace of the Khalifs at Cairo had not been handed down to us. We owe it to the historian William of Tyre.[1]

"As this prince's house," he says, "has quite strange arrangements, such as have never been seen in our time, we will here correctly set forth all that has been told to us by faithful reporters, who have been with this great prince, of his splendour, his immeasurable wealth, and his many lordly possessions, as it will be not unpleasing to know of them more exactly.

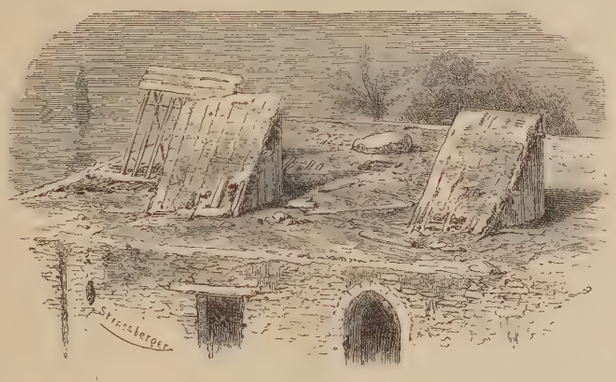
"Hugo of Cesaræa and Godfrey, the Knight Templar, arriving at Cairo accompanied by the Soudan, went to the palace called in the language of that country Kasare (ar-Kasr), preceded by a number of apparitors who marched in front with much clatter, armed with swords. They were led through narrow passages where there was no daylight, and at every doorway they met with companies of armed Ethiopians, who hastened to salute the Soudan as soon as he appeared. Having thus passed the first and second posts, they were shown into a larger space where the sun could shine, since it was open to the sky. Here there were galleries to walk in, with marble columns pierced and carved with gold in relief; the pavements, too, were of various materials, and the whole aspect of these arcades was really worthy of royal majesty. The elegance of the materials and workmanship involuntarily attracted the gaze of the passer-by, and the eye found it hard to turn from them, nor could it be satisfied with gazing on them. There were basins of marble filled with the clearest water; birds of infinite variety and unknown in our part of the world were heard singing, while their strange forms and colours were equally new and presented an extraordinary appearance, at least in the eyes of our countrymen, and they all had different food appropriate to their taste, according to their species. From thence they went still farther on, under the guidance of the chief of the Eunuchs, and they came to buildings as much more beautiful than the former as those had seemed superior to those usually seen in other places. Here they found an astonishing variety of quadrupeds, such as the fanciful hand of the painter might depict, or poetry describe in the licence of fiction, or the imagination of a sleeper invent in his dreams—such, in short, as actually exist in the East and South, while the West has never seen the like. After passing through many corridors and twisted passages,

[1] He was Bishop of Tyre, A.D. 1100—1187, and wrote "Belli sacri Historia, libri xxiii."

ROOMELEH PLACE WITH THE MOSQUE OF HASAN.

where the busiest might well have paused to gaze at all they saw, they reached the palace itself, where they found more numerous bodies of armed men and attendants forming considerable troops, which, by their splendid dress and great numbers, attested the incomparable magnificence of the sovereign of this place, just as the various objects they had seen proclaimed his wonderful splendour and wealth.

"As soon as they were within the palace the Sultan did homage, as is the custom, to his suzerain; he prostrated himself twice, offering him, as it were, a manner of worship which is paid to none other. Finally, after prostrating himself a third time, he divested himself of the sword that hung round his neck. Then, with surprising swiftness, the curtains of cloth of gold, embroidered with an infinite variety of precious stones, were withdrawn. These, which hung in the middle of the room, had concealed the throne, and the Khalif became visible, showing his face to all beholders, seated on a gilt throne, dressed in robes more magnificent than those of kings, and surrounded by a small number of eunuchs who were his retainers."[1]



MALKAFS.

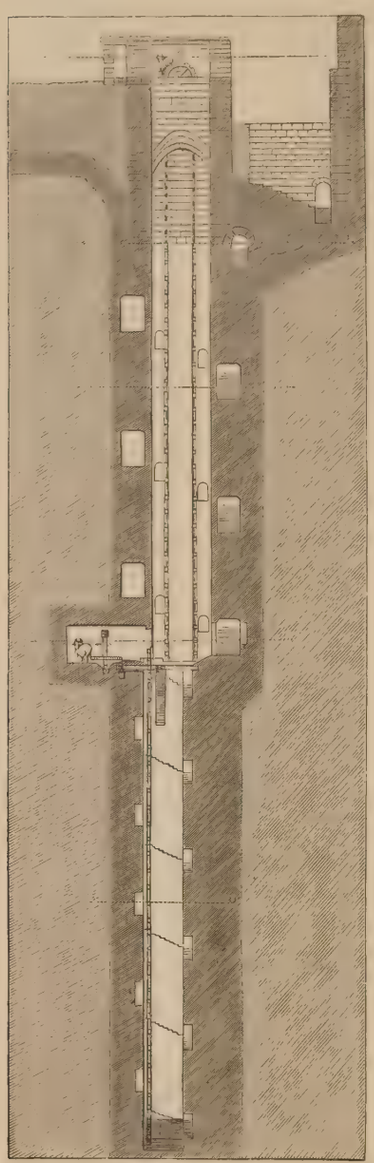
In this instance, too, written words have proved more enduring than stone and metal.

In the Citadel of Cairo, to which we will now return, a good deal remains from the period of its founders. But newer features of very various styles and of every date—early, late, and brand-new—are mingled with what is old, and greatly predominate. The fort is a fantastical and Babylonian medley of fabulous courts and labyrinthine corridors, of barracks and palaces, of abruptly precipitous walls and hideous *oubliettes*. It ought to be contemplated as a whole, and yet it is impossible to describe the way in which this whole is composed, or how the parts which constitute it, and which have so little resemblance to each other, are connected. Here the tallest minarets of Cairo seem almost to touch the sky, there the deepest well in the city has its bottom below the level of the Nile—on one hand rises a half-ruined and ancient wall of blocks from the Pyramids, on the other the shining alabaster walls and court of a modern mosque—here stands a palace with splendid pillars, and there a dilapidated place of worship. The old mosque yonder is turned into a granary, and this wing of the palace, formerly decorated with fabulous splendour, is now a barrack.

After climbing a steep street, in which breath altogether fails us, we find ourselves suddenly on a small plateau, fanned by the pure desert air, while the eye can gaze unhindered far and near. At our feet we see the busy—or lazy—swarms of people on the Roomeleh square, adjoining the old Karameydan, which now and henceforth bears the name of the founder of the vice-regal house,

[1] "Histoire des Faits et gestes dans les régions d'Outremer" (Guizot, coll. de Mémoires, Paris, 1823).

Mohammed Ali. The splendid Mosque of Hasan, which towers above this square or *place*, was built about two hundred years later than the citadel; but, even at the earlier date, great and small may have assembled here, taking part in every sort of amusement, and spending the month of Schawwal awaiting the starting of the great caravan of Mecca pilgrims. The eye glances across and away from this animated spot and the vast places of worship that dominate it, and we see before us the huge city spreading far and wide to the west and north. There are many human forms and fluttering garments to be seen on the flat roofs, which also support the openings of the ventilators, wooden structures resembling in form those that cover the cabin-ladder on board a river steamer. These "malkafs" form quite a little town on the top of the larger one, but the eye does not linger on them, for it is tempted to wander in every direction—and upwards especially—by the minarets, which stand up here, there, and everywhere in hundreds of tall and slender forms. But our upward gaze is soon dazzled by the rays of the sun and the sheeny glare of the whitewashed walls; and the eye turns away, lower and farther towards the west, where the broad Nile silently floods its green and fertile banks, and the Pyramids rise up on the margin of the desert at the foot of the rocky Libyan range.



SHAFT OF JOSEPH'S WELL.

What Vesuvius is to Naples the Pyramids are to Cairo; they are its peculiar and characteristic token or symbol, and if at any moment we forget—surrounded by evidences of European culture—that we are parted from our Western home by many a mile of sea and land, the Pyramids remind us of the fact that we are sojourning in the land of the Pharaohs. We glance rapidly across the Hill of Mokattam to the east, and the Wind-mill Hills to the south, across the strip of desert and the heaps of ruins; but we let our gaze linger somewhat longer on that strange scene—the Necropolis of Cairo. The different cemeteries, in distinct groups of tombs, lie far apart in the sandy waste; and, besides these, those towns of domed mausoleums, among which the two most justly celebrated are those of the Mamelukes, close below us to the south, and farther away, north-east of the citadel, the burial-place of the Khalifs.

POT FROM JOSEPH'S WELL.

So long as the sun is still high in the heavens, this great picture lacks half of its most bewitching charm. Grey, yellow, brown, dazzling white, with here and there a streak of green dimmed by dust or by distance, are the only colours that meet the eye; but we will visit the citadel again, and stand by the parapet of the

south-west platform early at sunrise, or in the evening before the sun has disappeared behind the Libyan range, when the radiant heavens flood the varied and suggestive picture with an infinite wealth of tints. Rosy clouds float like filmy veils round the slender minarets, a paler gold is mirrored in the Nile, the fields have a bluish-green bloom upon them, the horizon glows in regal purple, and the distant hills reflect a tender violet.

It is with difficulty that we tear ourselves from the scene, but before night falls we must turn back to the inner courts of the citadel. Here two neighbouring spots have remained unaltered from the time of Saladin. First, an utterly neglected mosque, in a half Byzantine style, with its dome fallen in; and, beyond it, a very remarkable water-work, called by the Arabs "Joseph's well," and said by them to have been dug by that son of Jacob who was governor under one of the Pharaohs it received its name, however, from Saladin, whose full name was Salah-ed-Deen Yoosuf—Yoosuf signifying Joseph. Abd-al-Lateef,[1] the contemporary of the great Sultan, who enjoyed the honour of his personal acquaintance, speaks of this well, which is accurately described by Makreezee.

It consists of a shaft 88.30 metres deep (about 289 feet). The water is raised in jars by two large wheels turned by the help of oxen, which go up and down on a sloping plane hewn out of the rock to about half-way up the shaft. Important as this structure was in early times, it has been of little value since the introduction of steam-pumps into Cairo. Besides, the water has a saltish flavour, in consequence, as Makreezee states, of a mistake made by Karakoosh,[2] who had the narrow opening —through which at first a small quantity of excellent water was procured—much enlarged, and so admitted the waters of a salt spring, that mixes with the sweet.

The great mosque which now graces the citadel, and whose tall and too slender minarets are visible from a great distance, must be introduced to the reader's knowledge with the other works of Mohammed Ali, who founded it, and after whom it is called.

Saladin, before his death, had concluded a peace with the Crusaders, and his successors—for he left seven sons and one daughter—inherited from him Egypt, Syria, Arabia, and a part of Mesopotamia. But during his lifetime he had already divided these vast possessions among his three eldest sons; the other members of the family had towns and provinces over which they ruled. His son Melik el-Azeez[3] was succeeded by Saladin's brother, Melik el-Adil,[4] who governed for a short time as guardian of his nephew, who was a minor, and then, having deposed the boy, who was only ten years old, governed Egypt on his own account. He is known also by the name which he bore before he usurped the throne, Seyf-ed-Deen Aboo Bekr, and we find on his coins that he—like all the other members of his family—had stamped, not his own name only, but that also of the feeble Abbasside Khalifs, whose supremacy he acknowledged. The heraldic double-headed eagle is remarkable on one of the coins here figured; it also occurs on ancient buildings in Cairo.[5] After Melik el-Adil, evil times fell upon the Mohammedan

[1] A.D. 1193. [2] Sobriquet of the Beha-ed-deen, Vizier of Saladin, A.D. 1174—1193.
[3] A.D. 1196—1200. [4] A.D. 1200.
[5] It appears still earlier, having been found on a small Babylonian hæmatite cylinder at least B.C. 500.

peoples of western Asia and Syria. But this is not the place to relate how the Eyoobide families made war on one another; how the Crusaders attacked even Egypt; how Damietta fell,[1] and Melik es-Salih—Saladin's grand-nephew—routed Louis IX. of France at Mansoorah,[2] and—as the reader already knows—kept him prisoner there; or how the Mongols overthrew the ancient sovereignties of Asia, overran China, and rushed on in wild hordes to the very frontiers of Europe. But I must not omit to mention that when Melik es-Salih, the last but one of the Eyoobide race —the last was murdered soon after he came to the throne[3]—aspired to form a strong body-guard such as the Abbasside Khalifs had had, which should ruthlessly carry out all his orders, this project was greatly facilitated by the inroads of the Mongols. For many individuals of the overthrown nations, particularly Turks and Kharezmians, must have emigrated into foreign countries and sought service wherever they could find it; and there can have been no lack of Turkish prisoners of war to be sold into slavery, and no one better able to purchase them than the wealthy sovereign of Egypt. A poet of that period addressed the founder of this

COINS OF MELIK EL-ADIL (SEYF-ED-DEEN ABOO BEKR, SON OF EYOOB). THE INSCRIPTION CALLS HIM THE "RIGHTEOUS KING."

body-guard—this heterogeneous troop of purchased warriors—Melik es-Salih, who in other respects was reputed a just and temperate prince, telling him he was committing a folly, for that he was inviting "the hawk's brood to settle in the eagle's nest." And the poet goes on:—

O glorious Saladin, I see thy son
Hurry to market to buy foreign slaves;
But soon to market they will make him run,
Sold into slavery himself by slaves.

The poet's prophecy was fulfilled. This body-guard, under the humble name of "Mamelukes"—*i.e.*, the slaves—became a terror, it is true, to Melik es-Salih's foes, and even to the armies of the Crusaders; but soon grew to be far more terrible to him and to his house, whose last scion, his own son, died under their daggers.

Much clatter of arms is heard throughout this period, and yet the arts of peace were by no means neglected, particularly at Cairo. Study, rhetoric, and philosophy throve in the universities and schools; singing and poetry under the immediate patronage of the princes and grandees—nay, even in the streets and in the household circle. The authors of the time of the Eyoobide dynasty are distinguished not only for the subjects of which they treated, but for the artistic elegance with which they wrote their manuscripts. Behâr ed-deen Zoheyr,

[1] A.D. 1219. [2] A.D. 1250. [3] A.D. 1256.

secretary to Melik es-Salih, enjoyed the greatest esteem as a calligrapher, and this beautiful penman was at the same time a poet, and a man of quite bewitching amiability. His poems, lately edited in a splendid form by E. H. Palmer, show us how high a degree of intellectual freedom was allowed to the soaring spirits of that age, and under what refined and delightful conditions of life the social intercourse of the Cairenes was carried on. The poet celebrates not mighty princes only and beautiful women, but garden-feasts, water-parties on the Nile, and

OLD ARABIC ENAMELLED GLASS CUP.

jolly drinking-bouts. It was to the city of the Khalifs that Behâr ed-deen Zoheyr invited one of his many friends in the following pleasant lines :—

"If you come to see me here, my friend,
Thanks and hearty welcome will await you,
If you come not—which the Lord forfend—
You are held excused; I cannot rate you."

The same amiable poet, in the following lines, thanks a friend for a letter which has given him extreme pleasure :—

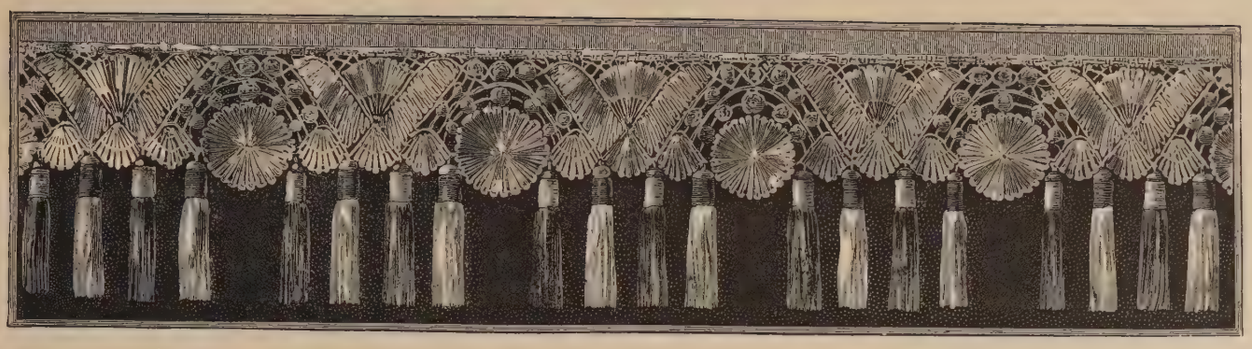
"Your letter came, and I declare,
My longing it expresses quite.
Methinks my heart was standing by
Dictating to you what to write."

Palmer's Translation.

With what subtle grace does the poet allude playfully to passages from the Koran to proclaim himself the prophet of truth and love! He is admirable, too, as

a satirist. He retorts on a would-be philosopher, who reproaches him with not understanding his arguments, by saying "he is no Solomon, that he should understand the language of beasts." We learn from his contemporary and biographer, Ibn Khallikan—the author of "Accounts of the Lives of Remarkable Men"—that our poet was born at Mecca, or at any rate near that city, and was on such terms of friendship with Melik es-Salih, his liege lord, as did the prince and the poet equal honour. It was in Cairo that Ibn-Khallikan met him, and wrote the following estimate of his character:—"He has great influence over his sovereign, who knows how to value him very highly, and entrusts him with his secrets as he does no one else. In spite of this he uses his influence only in the interests of justice, and benefits many by his good offices and friendly services." After the death of his sovereign (1249) the poet led a retired life, and rarely left his house. Nine years later he died of the plague, which raged fatally in Cairo. He was buried in the Karafeh, the necropolis of Cairo—with which we will shortly make better acquaintance—close to the mausoleum of the Imam Shafi'ee.

MAMELUKE EMIR.



CAIRO;

UNDER THE MAMELUKE SULTANS.

NO SOONER was the race of Eyoob extinct than Aybeg, a warrior of that troop of Mamelukes which were quartered on the island of Roda, and who called themselves the Bahrites (*i.e.*, of the river—*bahr*), seized the reins of government. He and his successors constitute the race of the Bahrite Sultans, under whose dominion much blood was shed in Egypt, though at the same time many great works were achieved.

The beginning of their rule was disgraced by frightful massacres. The palace in the citadel was their residence, and the very first of them was there assassinated in his bath by one of his wives. Another wife of the murdered man undertook to avenge him. She killed her guilty rival and flung her body into the ditch of the citadel, where it lay unburied for days, and every one who was suspected of having been an accomplice in the crime shared her miserable fate.

How many such deeds of horror these walls must have seen in those terrific times, and how fearful a harvest must Death have reaped in that field! His scythe swept over the house of the Abbassides also. Mighty kingdoms were overturned by the overwhelming might of

the Mongol invaders. A swarm of them under Hoolagoo conquered Bagdad (1258) and slew the last Khalif of the true blood of Abbas, with his two sons and all his nearest relatives.

When the Mameluke Beybars mounted the throne of Egypt by means of a murder, there were no true Khalifs left, and yet he felt that his sovereignty could not be regarded as firmly secured over the numerous Shiite sectarians, as well as the friends of the Eyoobides and of the crushed house of Abbas in Egypt and Syria, unless he could invest it with some semblance of legitimacy and religious consecration. He was much rejoiced, therefore, when he learned that a descendant of the Abbassides and of the Prophet, who gave himself out to be a son of the Khalif Sahir, had escaped the sword of the Mongols. He called him to Cairo without delay, received him there with the utmost pomp, conducted him to the citadel, and assigned a palace there as his residence. The chief Kadi was required to acknowledge his descent, and to do homage to him as Khalif. Beybars himself swore allegiance to him, and in return was invested by the new "Commander of the Faithful" with the office of Regent of all the lands then subject—or ever to become subject—to Islam. To carry out this farce to the end, Beybars received at the hand of the new Khalif the insignia which were to distinguish him as the representative of the Abbassides, and which consisted of a black turban richly embroidered with gold, a violet upper robe, a gold necklace, golden spurs, several sabres and swords of honour, two spears, and a shield. The standards of the Abbassides fluttered over his head as he mounted his white horse, which had black housings and was decorated with trappings of the colours of that house.

Beybars allowed the fullest liberty to this feudal lord of his own creating; but after the Khalif had fallen at the head of the legion which he himself commanded, in the struggle against the Mongols, Beybars set another "Commander of the Faithful" on the throne, who was also said to be descended from Abbas, but he kept him a helpless prisoner in the citadel. The same fate pursued his equally hapless successors, in whose name a series of Mameluke Sultans governed the country till the Ottoman Sultan Seleem I.[1] conquered Cairo and Egypt, and forced the last of these sham Khalifs to transfer to him his titles, rights, and dignities.[2] It is from this act and right of conquest that the Sultan ruling at Constantinople derives his claim to the title of "Commander of the Faithful." To the present day, it is true, the learned Sunnites still refuse to acknowledge his supremacy in spiritual matters, and ascribe it exclusively to the Grand Shereef of Mecca.

The history of Egypt under the Mameluke Sultans is only connected with that of Europe by very slight threads, and the pages on which it is written are deeply stained with blood; but the ghastly deeds of this race of warriors, who drove the Crusaders out of Palestine, were almost always done with the naked sword; while the Greeks had at an earlier date called Egypt the "land of poison," and even under the Ptolemies poison was the favourite tool of the ambitious, and preferred to every other means. Nor is there any lack of fine and manly figures among the Mameluke

[1] A.D. 1517.

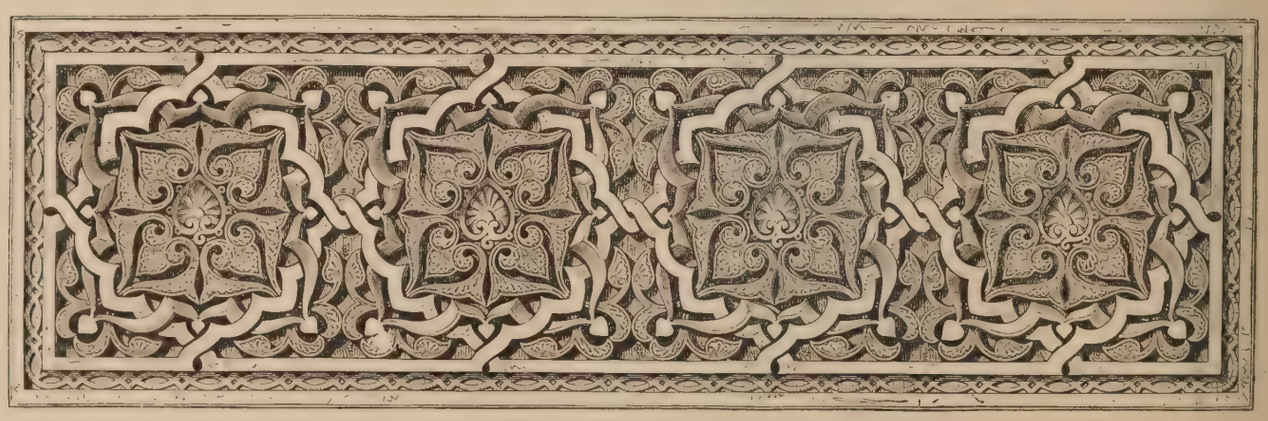
[2] Toomān Bey, the last of the Mamelukes, who made an heroic resistance at Ghizeh, fled to the Delta. Seelem exposed him on a camel for six days, and hung him in the arcade of a gate of the mosque of Mo'ayyad.

DOOR OF THE MORISTAN OF KALA'OON.

Sultans, many of whom had entered the Nile valley as slaves; and it must not be forgotten in their favour that most of them promoted the arts and sciences with such zeal, that all the noblest works of Arab art which have escaped destruction owe their origin to them. The Moristan (as it is called) of Kala'oon, which is the

ORNAMENTAL GIRDLING OF THE MORISTAN OF KALA'OON.

most richly endowed foundation, and the Mosque of Hasan, which is the most beautiful of the mosques of Cairo, were raised by the Mameluke Sultans of the Bahrite dynasty; but most of the numberless mausoleums which are known as the "tombs of the Khalifs" were built by Sultans of the family of the Circassian Mamelukes, who also caused many other mosques to be erected. From 1250 to

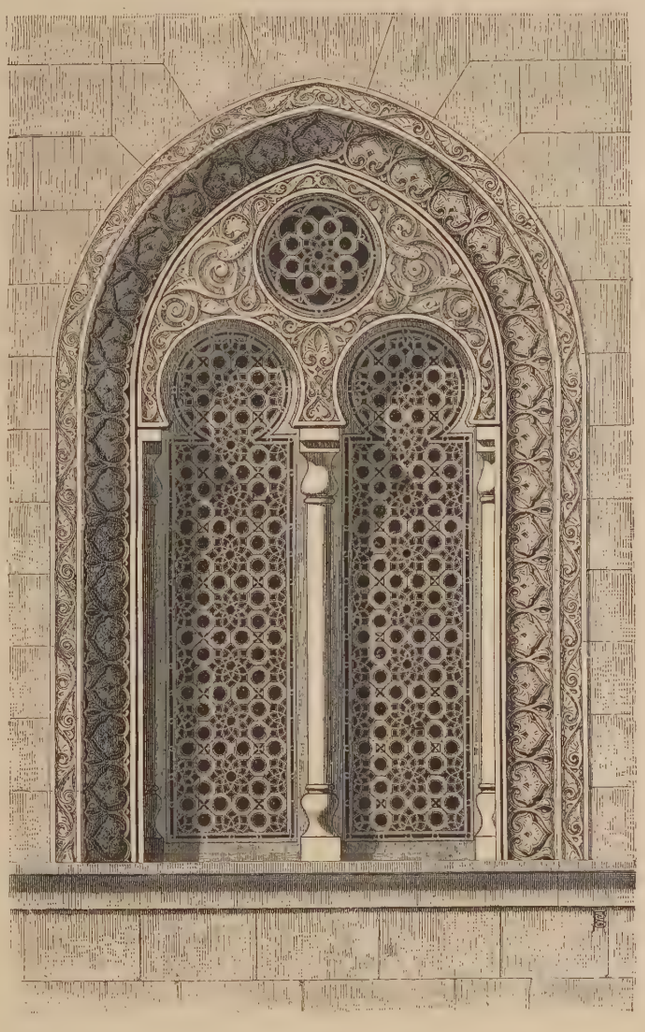


ORNAMENTAL GIRDLING OF THE MORISTAN OF KALA'OON.

1517 these princes ruled Egypt from the citadel of Cairo as their capital and residence. Kala'oon, who died in 1290, was the second successor of Beybars. He could glory in his successes over the Mongols and Crusaders, and the historians who wrote under his son's direction lauded him highly for his virtue and love of justice; but the author of the history of the Khalifs cannot forbear bringing a charge against him which his dealings seem to have justified—that he held no oath or treaty sacred if his interests required him to break them.

However, the Egyptians were far less oppressed under him than under his predecessor Beybars. He earned the honours which a nation is ever ready to pay to a victorious prince, and he may even have won many hearts by his extraordinary beauty, which brought 1,000 dinars into the pocket of the slave-merchant who brought him from Turkestan. Finally, he took care, by splendid endowments, to earn the name of benefactor of the poor and suffering.

The Moristan, or hospital, founded by him, now stands in the north-eastern quarter of the city, hard by the bazaar of the coppersmiths—who may be seen there at work on the deserted site of the vast, but neglected and now fast perishing structure. Only the tomb of its founder is preserved from destruction, and still visited by the sick, who expect to be cured of headache by the Sultan's turban-cloth, which is treasured as a relic, or who seek to be healed of intermittent fever by his caftan.



WINDOW IN THE MAUSOLEUM OF KALA'OON.

It is an effective and noble structure of the best period, and in former times owned an endowment for fifty readers of the Koran. On Thursdays young women generally resort to it, and mothers with little children. The former pray before the splendid shrine for male offspring, which are thought so important in Arab families, and which ensure to the mother an amount of consideration, which is usually denied her if she is childless or only bears daughters. Strange things, indeed, are to be seen by any one who succeeds in watching the devotional exercises of the women who come to this sacred spot. He will observe them with astonishment throw off all their upper garments, cover their face with both hands, and then leap from side to side in front of the niche till they sink exhausted on the ground. They often lie on the stone floor for a long time before they recover from this collapse and find strength enough to rise.

Many mothers bring very young children, not yet able to walk, that their "tongues may be loosed." For this extraordinary purpose the poor little creatures are conducted to a large polished dark stone near the right-hand

INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE OF KALA'OON.

window; a green lemon is squeezed upon it, and the juice is rubbed on to the large stone with a smaller one. As soon as the stone, which contains iron in some form, begins to turn red from the action of the vegetable acid, the child is made to suck it; of course the babies, who like nothing but sweet things, refuse, and scream with all their might. This delights the mothers, for the louder they scream the more the miracle is believed in, and the more surely will "the tongue be loosed."

A mysterious influence is also attributed to the pillars of the prayer-niche. They are covered at the lower part with a patina, or oxidation, which has not a very pleasing effect, as it is due to the lemon-juice deposited by the "loosened tongues" of the children. These extraordinary ceremonies have never before been described. When my informant, the architect Herr Schmoranz—one of the best connoisseurs in Arab art — succeeded once in watching them, he was discovered by an old Eunuch, and very probably his beautiful drawings might never have adorned these pages if he had not previously studied every part of the Mausoleum of Kala'oon, and so made himself familiar with all its passages and exits.

ROSETTE OF A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN CAIRO.

Not women and mothers only pray by the Sultan's tomb; the poor entreat for a better lot, and, in point of fact, few institutions have done more to alleviate sorrow and misery than that of Kala'oon, which included, besides the mausoleum, a school and a hospital of immense extent. There was a separate ward for each form of disease, and each patient had his own bed; women were received in a wing separate from the men; every sufferer, whether rich or poor, was nursed free of charge. Connected with the hospital proper were laboratories, dispensaries, kitchens, baths, and a lecture hall where the chief physician of the establishment gave his clinical lectures on medicine. The store-rooms for food, and the amount consumed, were so vast that several stewards were occupied solely in purchasing them and in accounting for the sums of money expended in them. The college connected with the institution was equally well furnished forth, and possessed a fine library; close by was a school for children, where sixty poor orphans found a home, food, and clothing.

This work of Kala'oon has outlived the memory of his warlike deeds, and causes his name to this day to be blessed, for every Moslem regards charity as the greatest virtue. All that is undertaken by the faithful must be done solely to the glory of God, and the stronger the power of the faith in his breast the greater will the number of his good works be. The loftier Christian conception of neighbourly love, as including all humanity, is foreign, no doubt, to the Moslem religion, but the sons of Islam are required to show love, pity, generosity, tender-heartedness, and patience to every fellow-Moslem; and of the five indispensable exercises by which the believer is to give proof of his faith the giving of alms was placed second by the Prophet, the first act of faith being prayer. We cannot, therefore, be surprised to see a magnificent benevolent

foundation like this Moristan of Kala'oon established on the broadest principles of pure humanity, and erected in the capital (at that time) of the Mohammedan world by a Moslem ruler, or to learn that not Cairo only, but every great city of the East can to the present day boast of similar institutions.

Nevertheless beggars have at no period been wanting in the city of the Khalifs, but these poor creatures, many of whom are blind—some led by children, many finding their way about with wonderful skill and certainty, though with no guide but a stick—seldom give the impression of being abject and cowering victims; on the contrary, they ask for assistance with a certain self-respect, and we, who understand the pious texts they call out to the passer-by, perceive that their object is on the whole not so much to excite compassion as to urge upon the rich man the duty of giving out of his abundance, and to remind him that he—the needy one—is justified in expecting from him who is blessed with a superfluity "the wages of his poverty, in the name of God." "I," cries the beggar, "am the guest of God and the Prophet, oh! God, the free giver!" or some such motto, and he who bestows freely is assured that by his gift he makes the Most High his debtor. Many beggars cry out, "I demand of God the price of bread, and he who pays the price giveth to the Lord." It might put our men of fortune to shame to see how large a portion of his income a wealthy Cairene, even at the present day, is wont to set aside for benevolent purposes. Pious endowments (*awkaf*—plural of *wakf*) are numerous and various, and consist in moneys and invested capital, which are managed by proper trustees. Most of them are attached to mosques, and intended for the support of schools (*medreseh*) and fountains or wells, which are always kept up in the neighbourhood of the mosques. These institutions—known as Sebeel—which afford relief to the thirsty, are a great boon in a rainless region and in a town where the natural water is all saltish surface-water. The benevolent custom of making cisterns dates, no doubt, from the time when the Arabs wandered as nomads through the desert, but it is equally valuable in the cities. The poor, needing to moisten his parched gums and unable to pay the water-carrier, would have to make his way to the Nile, which is at some distance from most parts of the city, if he could not find a drinking-fountain in almost every street. For several weeks before the Nile rises its waters become turbid, unwholesome, and almost undrinkable, though at other times they are so delicious that Champollion called them the champagne of drinking waters, and the Arabs say that the Prophet would have wished to live for ever if he had once tasted them; it is at that season, therefore, that the public fountains are most used. Many of them are enclosed by railings of finely-wrought iron, gilt bronze, or wood. A projecting roof shades the drinker, who mounts a few steps to the window of the cistern room, where the water is distributed, or to reach the metal tube out of which he sucks the refreshing liquid. Poetical inscriptions in

PUBLIC DRINKING FOUNTAIN.

gilt letters record the memory of the founders of the fountains, and their Arabic name—"Sebeel," or "Sebeel Allah"—signifies "the path to God," since the good deed of providing for the hungry and thirsty is the surest road, next to martyrdom, by which the faithful may attain to Him.

Hence even the water-carriers—who are wont to attract the attention of passers-by by clattering their metal drinking cups, and whose queerly-shaped water-skins look like the body of a goat with four stumps of legs—call out "The way of God, oh thirsty ones!"

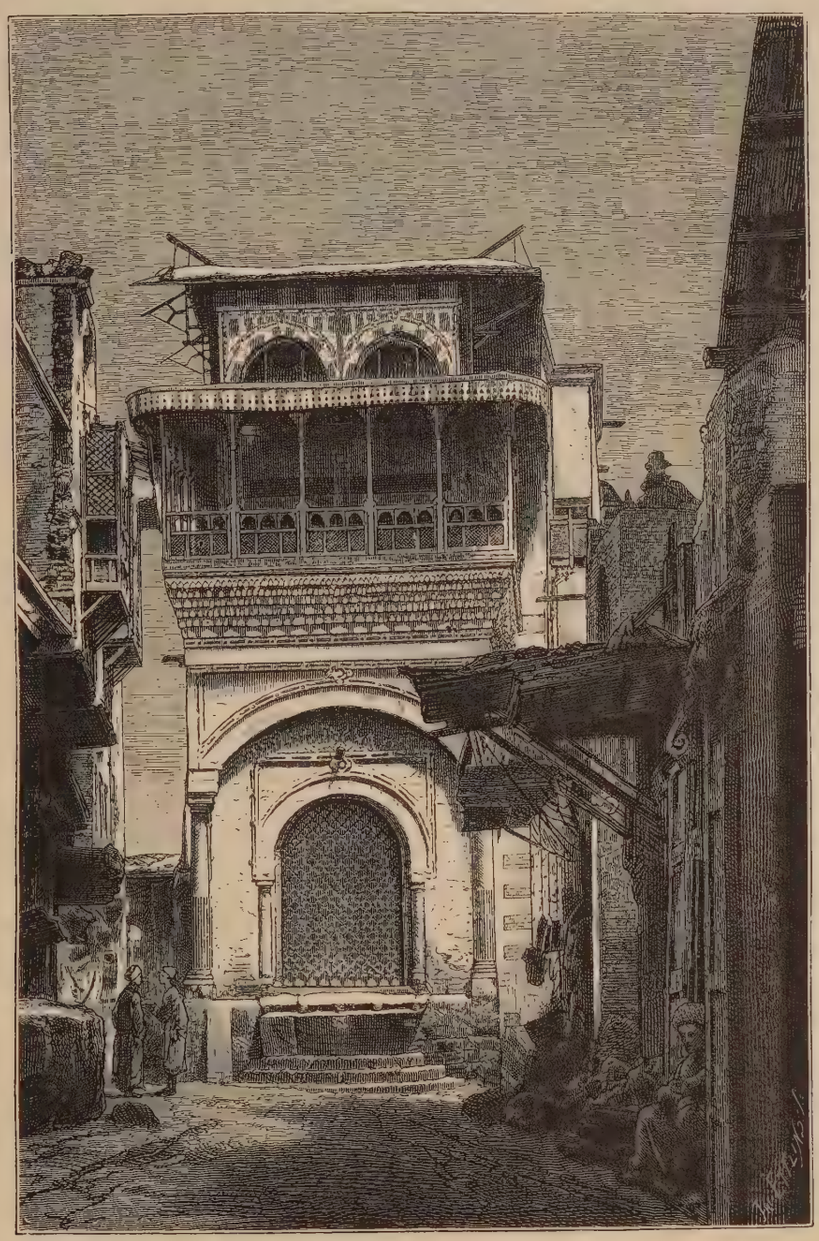
These words, no doubt, were first sung out in the desert; but pious phrases such as "God forgive thy sins, oh distributor of drink!" or "God have mercy on thy parents!" are particularly frequent on the lips of the water-seller when in honour of some festival he is hired to give the fluid free of charge to all that ask it; and each one who receives the bowl of refreshing fluid at his hand, while he thanks him, adds a fervent "Ameen" (Amen) to his pious invocation. When his water-skin is empty he calls down the blessing of God on the dispenser of the drink, and wishes he may come into Paradise.

The wells in the city are of course of far less consequence than those on the track across the desert, and the pious spirit of the Mohammedans has therefore associated another foundation with that of the Sebeel or city fountain, which very plainly proves how much of true and beautiful humanity is to be found in that much contemned Islam which we often accuse of empty formalism. The public wells are connected with houses of several storeys in which elementary schools are maintained out of the endowment money—usually for orphan boys. Thus, every builder of a fountain may be considered as a benefactor to orphans as well, and the more ancient of these institutions date from a period when, so far as I know, no institution for orphans had ever been thought of in Europe.

Numerous foundations of this kind were endowed under the Mameluke Sultans, and perhaps no sovereign who ever ruled in the Nile valley did more to enlarge and beautify Cairo than Kala'oon's youngest son, en-Nasir. He mounted the throne as a boy of nine years old, was deposed once by the ambitious Ameers, and on another occasion, after he had done great deeds, he was compelled to resign the government; at last, however, he re-entered the citadel, and took the reins of the state into his own hands. For forty-three years, in all, he governed independently, and was prudent, but suspicious—industrious and capable, but licentious, and passionately addicted to many costly amusements. During his second reign he beat the Templars, drove the Christians out of Aradus, and achieved the greatest deed of arms of his reign by vanquishing the Mongols in the plain of Merg as-Soffar, and annihilating their army of more than 100,000 men. The citizens of Cairo prepared a grand festival for the return of their triumphant Sultan after this victory. A splendid palace was erected to receive him, close to the Bab en-Nasr, with which we are already acquainted, and near it large basins were filled with perfect lakes of lemonade, which Mamelukes served out to the returning army to drink. Any one who had a house in one of the streets through which the procession of victors must pass could let it for a few hours for a hundred gold pieces to some of the curious who were attracted to Cairo. When, not long after, many buildings in the city were destroyed by an earthquake,

COURT IN THE MORISTAN OF KALA'OON.

and thousands of human beings were buried in the ruins, it was thought that this was a visitation sent by God to punish the arrogance and extravagance of the triumphant nation.



FOUNTAIN AND SCHOOL.

Some of them, and particularly the Christians, were ere long visited in another way. Some time before, and particularly under Hakim,[1] they had suffered much oppression and been forced to submit to humiliating edicts. Nasir showed himhimself more tolerant, until an envoy from the Sultan of Morocco met a Christian riding on horseback, who was haughtily pushing aside all those of lower rank who

[1] A.D. 996—1000.

came near him. The Moor, it is said, enraged by this haughtiness in an unbeliever represented the matter to the Sultan, and persuaded him to renew the strict edict, by which the Christians were compelled to wear blue turbans and the Jews yellow

STREET IN CAIRO.

ones, that they might be immediately distinguished from the Moslems. Christian and Jewish women were to wear a distinguishing mark on the breast, the men were strictly prohibited riding on horseback, and even on asses were allowed only to sit sideways. The ringing of bells on feast-days was to be discontinued, and Christians were forbidden to employ Moslems, either as slaves or in any hard labour. Their appointment to public office, in the magistracy or otherwise, was also prohibited.

A BLIND BEGGAR.

These decrees fomented the hatred of the lower orders of Moslems, who began to maltreat the unbelievers and to plunder the churches and synagogues, till the threats of Christian princes put an end to these melancholy outbreaks. During his third and longest possession of the throne Nasir undertook the beautifying of Cairo, with an expenditure that was almost extravagant. He is said to have given 8,000 dirhem (about £4,500) a day for building purposes, although he had not to pay for the forced labour of the lower classes and the slaves of the Ameers, but only to feed them while they dug and built for him. Syrian architects assisted his Egyptian artificers. A new canal, constructed by his orders, converted wide wastes of desert into garden-land, and as he had splendid palaces built for himself, his wives, and his children, the Ameers too vied with each other in erecting and decorating castles and suburban residences, which soon surrounded the city on all sides. More than thirty mosques many bath-houses, mausoleums, and cloisters are said to have sprung into existence at this time, and the governors of provinces were so ready to follow his example that the Viceroy of Damascus, for instance, had many old houses pulled down in his capital to build finer ones in their place, and to widen the streets.

AMONG THE OLD HOUSES.

Nasir was also a great lover of horses, and kept a number of experts among the Bedaween, whose business it was to look out for particularly fine ones. He deemed no price too high for a really noble steed, and he is said once to have paid 1,000,000 dirhem (about £560,000) for a single horse of exceptional beauty, and the large sums of gold that flowed to Sons of the Desert through his hands gradually estranged them from the simple customs and manners of their fathers. He himself would take part in horse-races, and do everything in his power to secure the victory for his own horses.

This chivalrous Sultan—in spite of a lame foot and small stature—was also devoted to the chase, and particularly to falconry for birds, a sport that is particularly successful in Egypt, where birds abound, and which, at that time, was a favourite pastime with all the Arab grandees. He would pay any price for a fine and well-trained falcon, and his masters of the horse and hunt enjoyed his particular

favour. He was, moreover, a good manager of his land; he had the making of new canals much at heart, and devoted himself quite passionately to the breeding of sheep and of geese. He was a fostering friend to the learned men of his time, and

ON THE OLD CANAL AT CAIRO.

raised the historian Abool-Fedâ—who, it is true, boasted of being descended from the elder brother of the great Saladin—to the rank of Sultan of Hamah, giving him all the privileges and marks of honour that he himself enjoyed. He forgave the son of the sage Kazweenee many misdeeds for his father's sake. This is not the place to enlarge on the weaknesses of a prince who at times devoted himself to the highest and gravest aims, and yet frequently gave himself up, body and soul, to the

most trifling pursuits. He would always be surrounded by the handsomest male and female slaves of all countries, and after a spell of hard labour would commit wild excesses at magnificent feasts.

When, after a painful death,[1] his eyes were closed, but few nobles followed his corpse to the tomb, and it is said that only one lantern and one wax taper were carried before the bier of the splendour-loving Sultan, who had been distinguished by many admirable qualities. He was laid in the tomb of his father Kala'oon.

HORSE RACE.

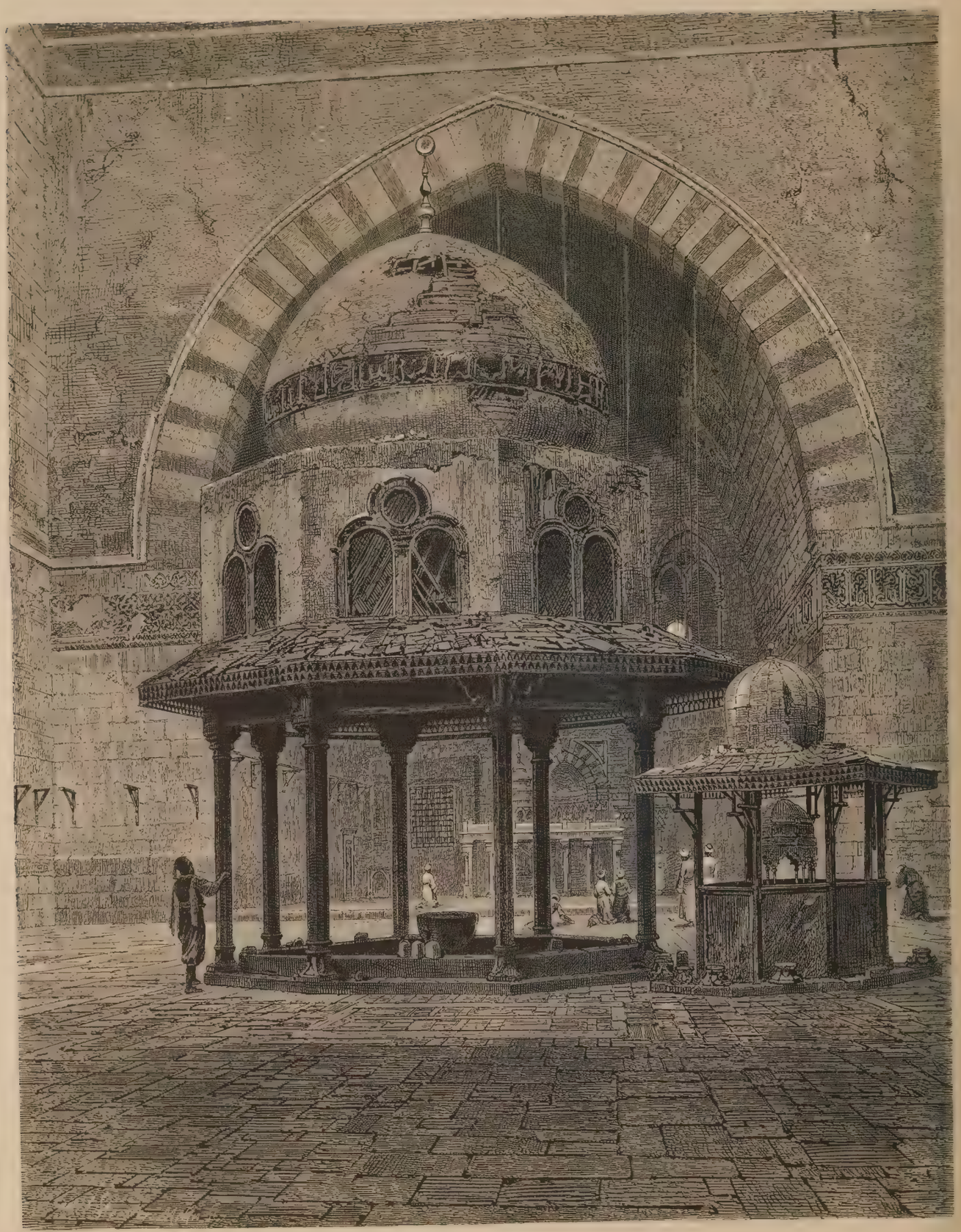
After his death, the Ameers disposed of the throne, though they had frequently declared that they would remain true to the house of Kala'oon, even if no descendant were left of it but one blind daughter. They kept the Khalifs during their lifetime shut up as their mere tools in the citadel, and compelled them to give a certain religious sanction to their proceedings. Nasir, indeed, had made use of the Abasside prince of his time, carrying him forth to battle as a sort of standard or ensign, to impose upon his enemies. Several grandsons of Kala'oon held the sovereignty under the Ameers, but none of these Sultans of a day could maintain himself on the throne, which in six years changed its owner six times, till a son of Nasir, only eleven years of age, and known as Sultan Hasan, assumed the sovereignty. Of all those "fainéant" princes we need only name Scha'aban, an older

[1] A.D. 1341. [2] A.D. 1316.

son of Nasir, for we have some particularly splendid specimens of Arab calligraphic and ornamental art executed in his reign. Four years after his accession, Hasan was forced with tears to restore to the nobles the authority they had lent him, but he was again entrusted with it shortly after. In the twenty-fifth year of his age he again aroused the dissatisfaction of the Ameers because he preferred Egyptian and Arab officials to the chiefs of the Mamelukes, and while he was flying from his

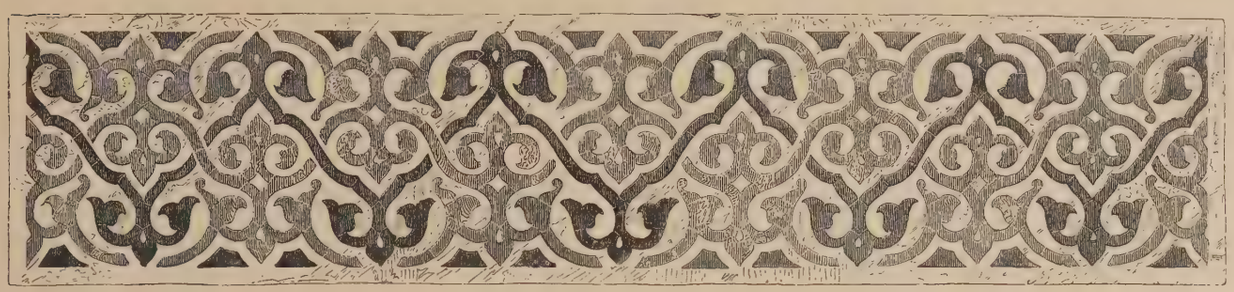
HAWKING OF THE HERON.

enemies he was taken prisoner by the powerful and bold High-Marshal Yelboghas, dragged into his house, and there murdered. From the time when he ascended the throne till his death was but fourteen years, and this short reign was remarkable for one fearful visitation which fell upon Cairo, and for the completion of one splendid work, which to this day is regarded—and with justice—as the most magnificent ornament of Cairo. Hasan himself retired to Siryakoos while the most fearful outbreak of plague that has ever visited Egypt raged from November, 1348, until January, 1349, slaying thousands daily. This awful epidemic, called the Black Death, seems to have come to Egypt from China by Tartary, Mesopotamia, and Syria, and to have been transmitted from Constantinople to Italy, Spain, France, and Germany.



INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE OF THE SULTAN HASAN.

Not men alone, but every living thing—nay, even plants—were attacked by the poison of this deadly disease. Plague-spots broke out on most of the domestic animals, and even on hares; the surface of the Nile was crowded with dead fish, the dates on the palms were full of worms, and uneatable. In the short space of two



ORNAMENT OF THE HEAD-PIECE OF A DOOR OF THE MOSQUE OF SCHABAN.

months 900,000 men are said to have died in Fostât and Cairo, and we are told that several estates changed owners seven and even eight times from the sudden death of the possessors.

The reader of Makreezee's account of the course of this pestilence will be

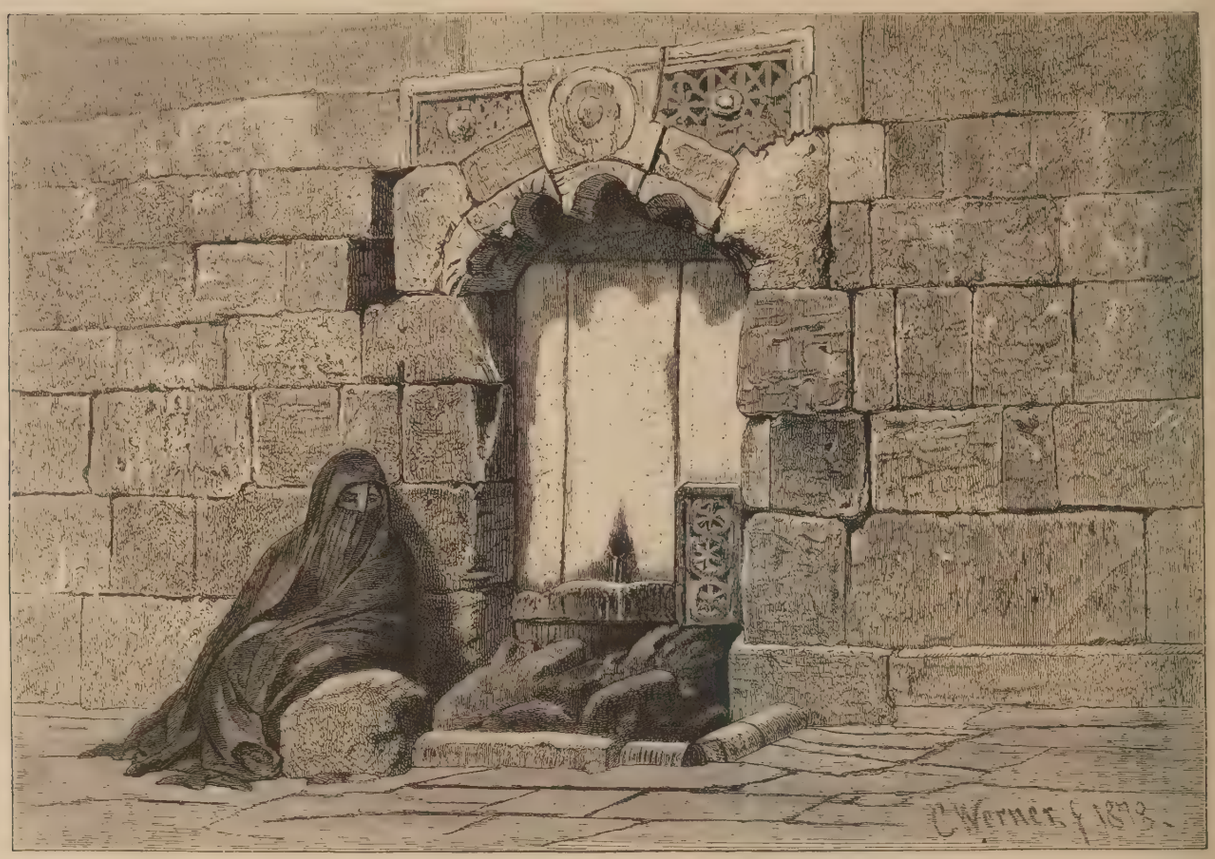
FRIEZE IN THE MOSQUE OF THE SULTAN HASAN.

reminded only too vividly of the terrible visitation which decimated Pharaoh's subjects just before the Exodus of the Jews.

The same avenging angel, which then slew the first-born of all the land, passed again from house to house on the Nile shore; and this incident in Egyptian history seems better adapted than any other to illustrate to the reader Alma

Tadema's striking picture of an Egyptian mother bewailing her son under the ninth plague of Egypt.

Every class fell victims to this pestilence; there were no tillers in the fields, no servants in the houses, no water-carriers for the thirsty, no artisans to produce clothing and necessaries, and it is difficult to comprehend where, within a short time of this visitation, Sultan Hasan could find the means and the hands to build that sacred edifice which is justly regarded as the most magnificent and perfect production of Arab architecture. He is said, it is true, often to have found himself embarrassed,



REMAINS OF CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE TIME OF THE MAMELUKE SULTANS IN A MODERN FOUNTAIN.

for the building of this mosque took three whole years, and it cost twenty thousand drachms of silver daily.[1] When Hasan was advised to abandon the completion of a work which swallowed up such vast sums he was not to be dissuaded, but replied that he would give no man the right to say that a sovereign of Egypt had lacked means to build a house of God. After it was completed, he is said to have commanded that the architect should have his hand cut off, to prevent his ever designing another building of equal beauty in any other place. This structure differs in arrangement too from all the other ancient mosques that I am acquainted with, and it cannot be denied that the master who was entrusted with carrying out the work did not keep himself entirely free from European, and more particularly from Italian influence,

[1] About 15,000 francs, or £600, according to Makreezee.

THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN.

though none of those features are absent which we have learned to regard as characteristic of a Moslem place of worship. Thus, even in the mosque of Hasan, the Hosh el-Gama forms the nucleus of the edifice; but it is smaller than in the oldest mosques we have seen, and instead of the colonnades which, in those, surround the main court, we here find a very lofty hall with an arcade of pointed horse-shoe arches on each of the four sides of the court. This main court and its four wings, the principal part of the mosque, constitute a Greek cross. It is impossible to tread this grand space, where no roof intercepts the light of day, without being deeply impressed. All that surrounds us is majestic, solemn, and harmonious; and, if we turn our attention to the details of the ornamental work in the sanctuary and in the mausoleum itself, we shall feel our utmost artistic requirements satisfied by the infinite play and variety of lines, and the beautiful and flowing forms of the recurring designs, and long to know the meaning of the words and texts from the Koran that are tastefully introduced into the Arabesques—a decoration full of significance, and in many places conveying lessons of warning while gracing the design. The rich ornamentation of the wall-surfaces at first seems arbitrary and puzzling, but we soon perceive that the curves are not entangled in a mere fantastic maze, but combine in regular order with the inspiring texts that appeal to the heart and soul of the believer. The Moslem is forbidden to use any image to beautify his sanctuary, so he ornaments it by the bold and skilful application of lines, and by mottoes addressed to the beholder. Every portion of this costly structure is neglected and injured, and yet we feel our spirit elevated as we lift our eyes to the enormous arches which enclose the court of the mosque, like four gigantic barbicans, and support the walls, crowned with a majestic cornice and ornaments of simple lily-form.

ORNAMENT FROM A LARGE PORCH OF THE MOSQUE OF THE SULTAN HASAN.

In the midst of the court, which is paved with slabs of coloured marble, there is a large fountain, and, near it, a small one. The first is for the ablutions of the Egyptians, and has a cupola fancifully shaped like a globe, and coloured blue, crowned by a crescent, and surrounded by a broad belt of inscription in gold letters. The second and smaller fountain was formerly used by the Turks only. At the south-east corner of the court a pointed archway, with a span of more than sixty-seven feet, forms the entrance to the vaulted holy of holies. Here none of the accessories are wanting which we have already met with in the Leewan of the Mosque of Amroo. The *mimbar* or pulpit is supported on stone pillars, and Sultan Hasan himself—who during the periods of his deposition had devoted himself to theological studies—would sometimes mount its steps to address the people, who had to remain in the larger space outside the sanctuary. Numerous lamps hang low down, suspended from the top of the vault, to light up the sacred chamber for evening prayer. In the farthest background of this holy of holies are the prayer-niche, and the entrance into the mausoleum of the builder of the mosque, known as the Maksoorah. This

CARPET MERCHANT IN THE KHAN EL-KHALEEL.

tomb has a particularly impressive effect; for the quadrangular room, in the midst of which is the sepulchre, is crowned by a cupola which reaches to the height of 180 feet, and the transition from its circumference to the quadrangular structure on which it rests is effected in a really classical way by the introduction of brackets wrought in a honeycomb and stalactite design. The lower part of the walls of this chamber is inlaid with coloured marbles, and the upper part has a frieze with texts from the Koran in large letters. But even here nothing is done for its preservation, and yet the tomb of Hasan is a favourite resort of the Cairenes, who do not know that the body of its founder was never recovered, and, therefore, cannot be resting there. They love to assemble to discuss public news of all kinds in this commodious space; but many of them visit the tomb of the Sultan to be cured of certain complaints. Catarrh and similar disorders disappear when the tongue is moistened by the reddish fluid which is obtained by wetting the porphyry threshold-stone with water and then rubbing it with a certain miraculous pebble, which is carefully preserved. The two pillars to the right and left of the niche in the farther wall are also considered to have healing powers. He who licks one of them can be cured of jaundice, and women who suck the juice of a lemon they have rubbed upon them will be blessed with offspring.

NICHE FOR PRAYER.

Surely the architect who designed and built the great entrance-niche on the northern side of this mosque never dreamed of these small souls sunk in the crassest superstition. It is led up to by steps, and rises above them to a height of sixty-five feet; the top of it is an apse, interrupted in its spring and supported on stalactite work. The walls are lined with rich arabesques, and a portion of the cornice—with its honeycomb design—which runs round the whole of the outer wall of the mosque, crowns the façade, in the midst of which we find this entrance-niche—a portal worthy of any temple. The transition of the large bulbous cupola into the square base is effected by an intermediate polygon. The larger of the two minarets belonging to this mosque has no equal in Cairo as regards its height, which is about 280 feet. The thickness of the enormously strong walls is worthy of remark, and the building produces even from outside an impression of complete and perfect seclusion from the

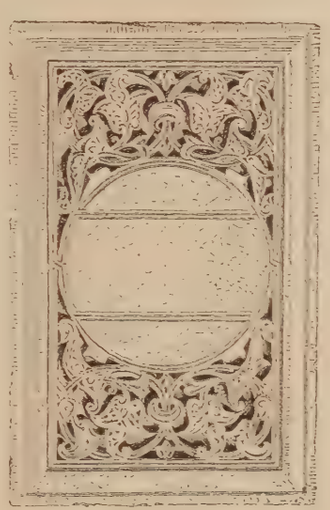
PORCH OF THE MOSQUE OF THE SULTAN HASAN.

pillars built into its angles. Unfortunately one of the minarets must have had a less firm foundation than the rest of the edifice, for it fell in soon after the structure was finished, and buried in its fall the fountain-school which Hasan had established near his mosque, and in which three hundred orphans were brought up at his

ORNAMENT FROM THE GREAT PORCH OF THE MOSQUE OF THE SULTAN HASAN.

expense. These unfortunate children were killed at the same time by the enormous blocks falling from such a height.

We have lingered long over the description of this building, because it is, on the whole, the finest and most beautiful of all the funeral mosques that have cupolas. Many such, it is true, stand in various parts of the city—by far the greater number in the east of Cairo, where there are large groups of them standing together, and known as the tombs of the Khalifs and Mamelukes. It is no longer possible to determine what princes are buried in these last, which lie to the south of the citadel; but well-preserved inscriptions tell us that the so-called "tombs of the Khalifs" have no right to that name, since most of them were built in the time of the Mameluke princes, who succeeded the Bahrite rulers—of whom Hasan (died 1361) was one—and who were known as the Burgite or Circassian Sultans. Barkook, Farag, Burs-bey, Inal, Kayt-Bey, el-Ashraf, and Kansoowah el-Ghooree—whose mausoleums with cupolas are celebrated as the finest of the so-called Khalifs' tombs—were members of this family of rulers.

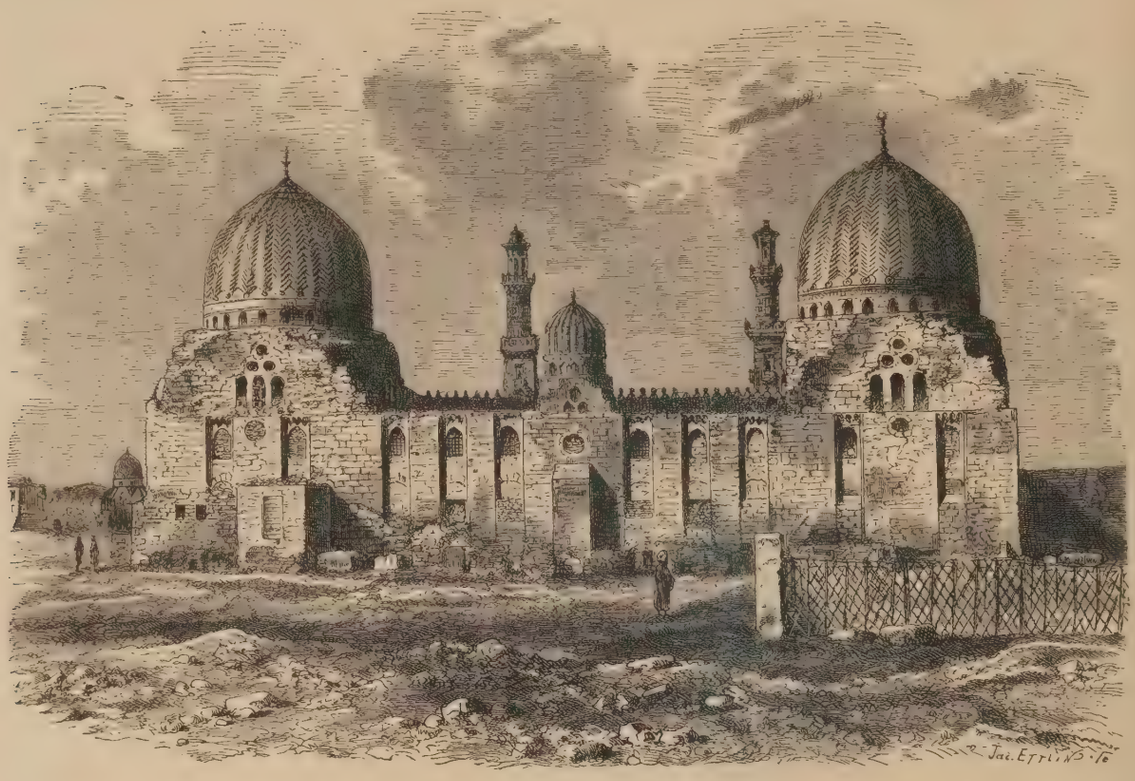


ORNAMENT FROM THE GREAT PORCH OF THE MOSQUE OF THE SULTAN HASAN.

From 1382 to 1517 the fate of Egypt was in the hands of these unbridled men, many of whom had first come into Egypt as slaves. They had already received the name of Burgites in the time of Kala'oon, who gave the tower of the citadel as a residence to the Circassians of his body-guard—and the word *burg* signifies a fort or tower of defence; he also gave them a particular uniform.

The first of them who succeeded in seizing the sceptre was Barkook, who had been sold into Egypt as a slave, and who, when he had overthrown the Bahrite

Mamelukes, kept possession of the throne for seventeen years. Self-willed, subtle, and brave, at the same time suspicious and cruel, he recklessly pursued whatever object he had in view; and yet, in spite of the blood he shed and the tortures he inflicted, he was to the end of his life a patron of science and art. The great historian Ibn Khaldoon lived in his reign, and was his friend; though he could not persuade the Sultan to take energetic steps against the growing power of the Osmanlee, whom he, with prophetic insight, looked upon as a more dangerous foe than even the Mongols, led at that time by the all-conquering Timoor. Barkook's memory is still kept fresh in Cairo by his beautiful mosque-tomb, where, by the side



TOMB, WITH MOSQUE, OF BARKOOK.

of his own mausoleum, and another erected for his harem, he also established a fountain with its school, chambers for the students and their teachers, and for the officers of the sanctuary. The mausoleum is crowned by two fine cupolas, one over the men's graves and the other over the women's, and it has two minarets; close to it is the monument of Sultan Farag, the son and successor of Barkook. The great conqueror Timoor died before Farag, and his death relieved Egypt of the most pressing danger that, at that time, threatened her independence.

It would weary the reader if I were to relate in detail the innumerable bloody struggles for the throne, the revolts and deeds of violence of which Cairo was the scene under the Circassian Mamelukes. These overbearing and usurping foreigners could have no idea of true patriotism or of the sacrifice of their own interests to the common good. Each in his turn plundered the "provision-land of the earth," or the "mother of well-being," as Arab writers delight in calling Egypt. Their rapacity was insatiable,

and although it is true that magnificent edifices were built under their auspices, this was only because they were filled with the desire to impress on their contemporaries and on posterity a due idea of the power and wealth they had at their command.

ORNAMENT FROM THE MOSQUE OF BARKOOK.

One of the most splendid mosques in Cairo is that of Farag's second successor, whose name was Sheykh el-Mo'ayyad, and who came into Egypt as a slave at twelve years old. This was erected on the site of what had been a prison, into which he had been cast by his enemies; at that time he made a vow to convert that dungeon into a mosque if ever he attained the throne. When he became Sultan, he splendidly redeemed his word, for he expended the enormous sum of 400,000 dinars (about £225,000) on the edifice called by his name, and containing the mausoleums of himself and his family—although, as may be easily seen, and as historians tell us, he had the pillars used in it brought away from ancient dwelling-houses, palaces, and mosques. This mosque, which has been lately restored, is, perhaps, the most splendid of all those in Cairo; thirty polishers and a hundred workmen were employed on it for years; but it no doubt displays a certain overloaded style. The desire to adapt and subordinate the perfect beauty of noble forms of detail to the harmonious proportions of a grand architectonic unity had given way to a wish to dazzle the beholder by splendour of colouring, costliness of material, and a superabundance of decorative design. The court, with its well, is surrounded, as in other mosques, with colonnades. Among the pillars which support the arches we find several of the Corinthian order, which owe their origin to Greek or Roman artists, and which were removed, as has been said, from very ancient buildings. The sanctuary is particularly splendid, with a coffered ceiling inlaid, painted, and gilt; but the effect is not produced by noble forms, but by material and display; and though in many parts of this mosque the eye is charmed by lovely details, it is soon disenchanted again by others which are both inartistic in conception and careless in execution.

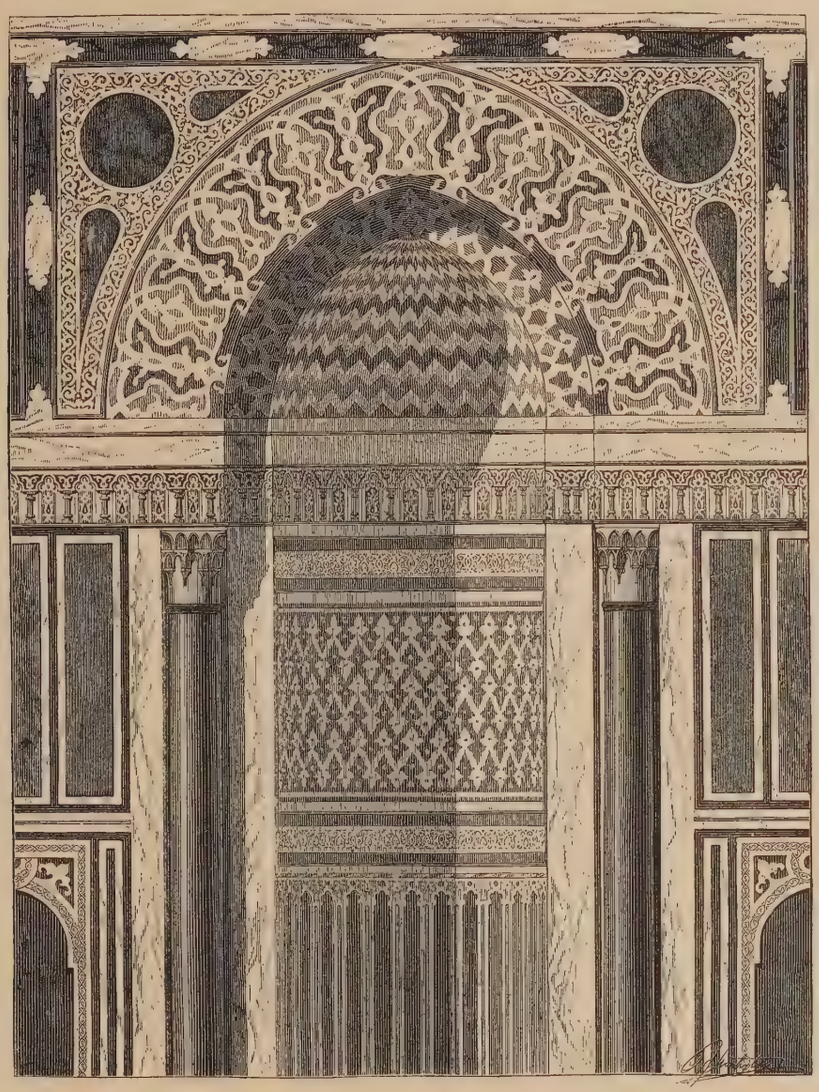
ORNAMENT FROM THE MOSQUE OF BARKOOK.

FOUNTAIN AT THE TOMB AND MOSQUE OF BARKOOK.

NECROPOLIS AT THE FOOT OF THE CITADEL.

Sheykh Mo'ayyad had won splendid victories over the Syrian generals[1] by the military genius of his son,[2] and many of his contemporaries praise him as a fine orator, poet, and musician; but the unprejudiced judgment of posterity can only hold him in horror as a hypocrite in religion, cruel, and insatiably avaricious.

Highly-gifted Mohammedan travellers have praised his mosque as a "collection

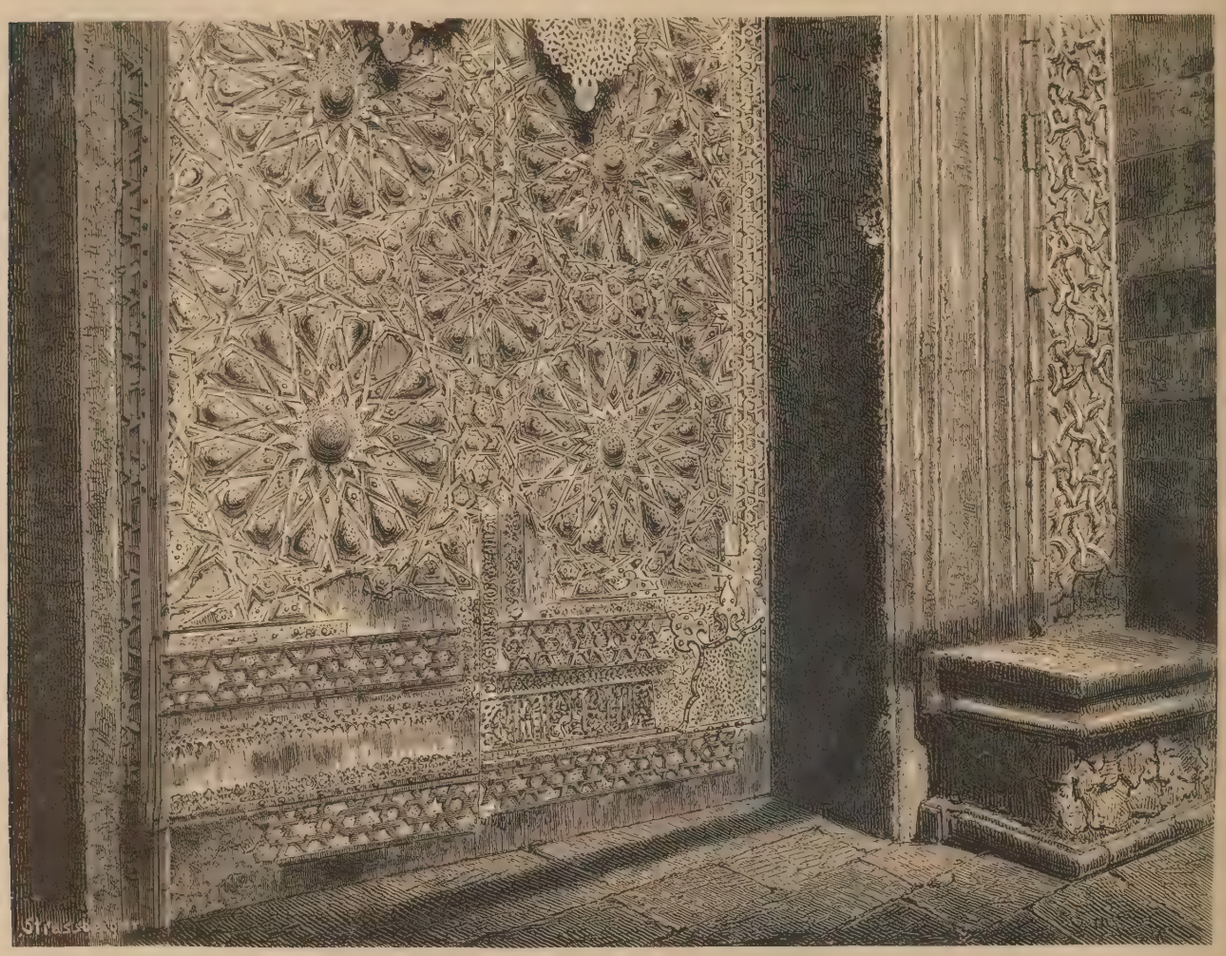


NICHE FOR PRAYER IN THE MOSQUE OF THE SULTAN MO'AYYAD.

of architectural beauties," and have declared with rapture that the strength of the pillars in it proves that the king who built it was the "prince of the sovereigns of his time." Sculptors, too, assert that, "compared with this, the throne of Belkes [the Mohammedan name for the Queen of Sheba] was but a trifle, and the far-famed palace of the ancient Persian kings scarcely worth speaking of." But only three years after the death of Mo'ayyad[3] it was discovered that one of the minarets—there

[1] A.D. 1412—1421. [2] Ibrahim, who died at an early age. [3] A.D. 1421.

were three—leaned considerably to one side. A council of architects was convened, and pronounced their opinion that, as the falling stones were causing many deaths, it must shortly be pulled down. The door of the mosque was closed for thirty days, and the architect, Mohammed el-Burgee, had to put up with the satirical verses of the poets of Cairo for a much longer period. It is true that an excuse for the mishap was found, for many people asserted that the damage was done by the "envious eye" of people looking on at the unfinished work—that "evil eye" against



DETAILS OF THE PRINCIPAL DOOR OF THE MOSQUE OF MO'AYYAD.

which the Egyptians have protected themselves, by amulets and spells, from the time of the Pharaohs to the present day.

The superstition of the Cairenes is especially attracted to this mosque and to the neighbouring Bab el-Zuweyleh. The latter, particularly, is a favourite haunt of the Kutb, that miraculous being whose chief resort is the roof of the Kaaba at Mecca, and who often shows himself to the true believer, in the humble guise of a man. At this particular spot he cures the toothache, and those who are suffering from it drive a nail into the door of the gate, or pull out a tooth and crush it in the roadway beneath.

Mo'ayyad was succeeded by his son, who, however, died in three months, leaving

his eldest son, a boy of ten, upon the throne ; but his preceptor, Burs Bey, who had previously been a slave, soon contested it, and succeeded in taking possession of it. The mausoleum of this usurper also stands among the tombs of the Khalifs.[1] He died a natural death, after a reign of sixteen years. He carried Janus, King of Cyprus, prisoner to Cairo,[2] that island being at the time the head-quarters of the pirates who infested the Mediterranean and interfered with its commerce ; he had kept the Mongols from invading Egypt, though at the cost, it is true, of a not very honourable peace, and had earned the title of Protector of Mecca. He had acquired the possession of the harbour of Jedda at the same time as that of the Holy City, to which it belonged, and the commerce of these two towns had not long before been much increased ; for the ships voyaging from India and Persia, and which had formerly brought their freights to Aden, avoided calling at that port in consequence of the oppressions exercised by the princes of Yemen after the year 1422 ; but when the navigator Ibraheem, of Calcutta, had met with a good reception at Jedda—at first with one ship only, but subsequently with a little fleet of fourteen large and heavily-laden merchant-men—trading-ships began to frequent that port in much greater numbers than before. By the year 1426 not less than forty merchant-ships from India and Persia were anchored in the harbour of Jedda, and had to pay a duty of 70,000 dinars (about £40,000). And how much more important must the tribute money have been which the pilgrims had to pay, who united to their pious purpose the usual business in small trade!

The great fair of Jedda, the scene of rendezvous where representatives of every nation acknowledging Islam annually assembled, was at that time second to none in importance. Under the Mameluke princes the Red Sea was the great high-road by which the whole of the commerce between India and Europe must pass. The "infidel" King of Ceylon sent ambassadors to Sultan Kala'oon to conclude with him a treaty of commerce, and in the time of Kala'oon's grandson envoys came even from China to Cairo ; their huge junks had long been the medium of commerce across the Indian Ocean. The ancient caravan route from the Red Sea to the shores of the Nile was trodden by long files of heavily-laden camels, and at the ports of Keft—and subsequently at Koos—the vessels waiting to load and unload were almost innumerable. Thirty-six thousand boats, it is said, navigated the Nile, and the Florentine Frescobaldi asserts that in his time (1384) there were more vessels in the harbour of Cairo than at Genoa, Venice, or Ancona. Under the Mamelukes it fell to Alexandria's share to supply the requirements of Western Europe in the matter of Eastern merchandise. Representatives of every commercial nation and city were to be found there, and it has been said with justice that, at that time, the position held by any nation in relation to the general commerce of the world might be accurately estimated by its footing in that emporium. The Venetians would seem to have outstripped all other dealers, though the Genoese concluded special agreements with Sultan Kala'oon, and with his son Khaleel,[3] who built the Khan el-Khaleel, which became the centre and head-quarters of business in Cairo. The

[1] A.D. 1422.

[2] After paying a large ransom and agreeing to an annual tribute he returned as a vassal to Cyprus.

[3] Who ascended the throne A.D. 1292.

Black Sea may be said to have been their special domain, and they, assisted by the Venetians, carried on the trade of importing Greek and Circassian slaves. The Nile valley, which is so poor in forests and mines, had also to be supplied from the North with ship-timber and iron ; for without a due supply of these indispensable

ABYSSINIAN FEMALE SLAVE.

materials, Egypt was unable to construct a single ship of all her fleet. This fleet had often inflicted the greatest damage on those of western countries ; a large portion of the gold and silver coined in Europe flowed into the hands of the infidels of the East, the trade in slaves—among whom there were only too many Christians, both men and women—could not, of course, be countenanced by the Church, and so it came to pass that the Pope repeatedly prohibited all trade between the maritime

nations of Europe and the seaports of Egypt, and threatened the refractory with all kinds of temporal and eternal punishment. But the Christian merchants were more tempted by the certainty of earthly profit than terrified by the threats of the Church, and they exchanged money and merchandise with the unbelievers with all the more unconcern that the enormous profit they easily made enabled them to spend the more freely in purchasing pardons and dispensations.

The lion's share in these enormous transactions flowed into the coffers of the Egyptian Sultans, for we learn from a table of prices-current, drawn up by a companion of Vasco de Gama, that Indian spices were five times as dear in Cairo as in Calcutta, and that this was in consequence of the high duty that had to be paid on them in Egypt, to supply the Mameluke Sultans with a large proportion of the treasure which even the least lavish of them freely spent, as we have seen. Burs-bey, and his predecessors and successors were accounted the wealthiest princes in the world; and, in truth, the sums disbursed in their reigns for every kind of luxury were beyond all measure great. The purchase of new Mamelukes and pages, of fine horses and other beasts, cost millions yearly. We have already seen what enormous sums were swallowed up by the architectural ambition of these sovereigns; but their greatest outlay was in keeping up their court, of which the splendour involved lavish expenses; their harems were crowded with wives and eunuchs, with Circassian, Greek, Abyssinian, and other female slaves—some of whom cost a perfect fortune—with singers and dancing women. Even the lower servants were clothed in silk, and wore gold ornaments. Their wives and favourite slaves must have pearls and precious stones, not only for their personal decoration, but for their household vessels and small wares, and for the litters in which they were borne to the country-houses of their masters with an escort of eunuchs and Mamelukes.

The East is the land of gifts, and probably not a day passed in which a considerable value in gold, slaves, horses, jewels, and robes of honour was not dispensed to his subjects by the hand of the sovereign. Beyond a doubt, the most fertile arable land in the world yielded great returns, and the quickly-emptied coffers could be re-filled again and again by exorbitant taxation of the citizens and peasantry, by the sale of places, by confiscations and penalties inflicted on all "unbelievers" in Mohammed; but all these sources of wealth would prove insufficient against the frightful and extravagant consumption if commerce had not again and again filled the treasury to the brim.

This influx of gold was seriously diminished by Burs-bey, for he prohibited all trade in spices to private individuals, assumed the monopoly of all Indian merchandise, and sold it by his officials for such insanely high sums that the Frank dealers would only purchase what was absolutely necessary, and the Venetians sent a fleet to Alexandria and threatened to cease all dealings with the countries under his rule. This reduced him to less sweeping demands, but he adhered to the monopoly in pepper and sugar; and in Egypt itself pepper was not to be purchased excepting from his officials; nay, he took away from the merchants the stock they had in reserve, and gave them so small a compensation that they suffered severely. He laid claim to the right of dealing in many other articles, and the discontent of his subjects led to revolts, and to reprisals on the part of the Venetians and of the

Princes of Castile and Aragon, who captured several of the Egyptian vessels. The mischief entailed on his country by his insatiable avarice was enormous. His greed went so far that—if we may believe his contemporary Makreezee, who stamps his character with infamy—during his reign Egypt and Syria were depopulated and impoverished.

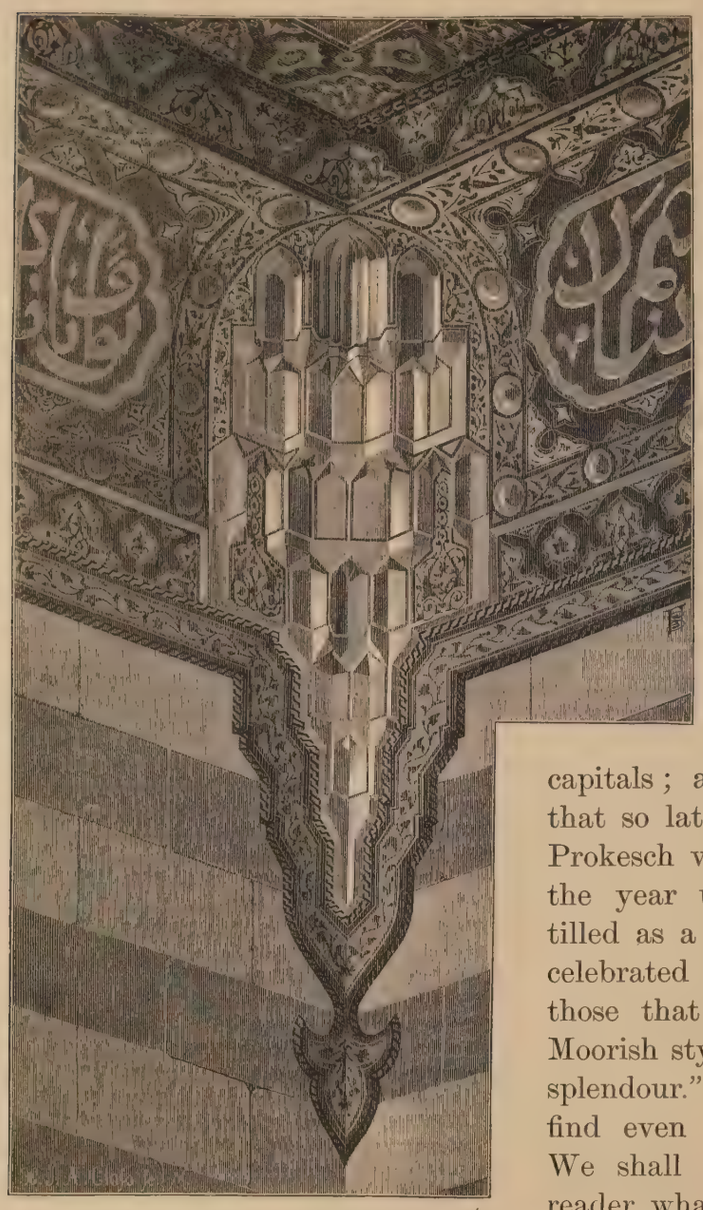
In the short space of thirty years after the death of this prince eight Circassian sultans succeeded each other, and under their rule Constantinople was allowed to fall into the hands of the Turks, who gave it the name of Istamboul or Stamboul. After the deposition of Timoorboga, the last of these princes, Kayt Bey, a Mameluke whom Burs-bey had purchased for fifty dinars, succeeded in possessing himself of the

COUNTRY RESIDENCE, AND WATER WHEEL, AT CAIRO.

throne, and governed for twenty-nine years. This *parvenu* had in his youth been distinguished as a brave lance-thrower, and as instructor of the fencers, who used then—as they do to this day—to exhibit their prowess at the setting forth of a caravan of pilgrims. He proved his mettle several times as sultan, and showed himself a skilful statesman, and indefatigably active and adroit in the business of government. He was at the same time violent, and his love of money amounted to the meanest covetousness. Under him a successful resistance was offered to the Turks, under Mohammed and Bayazeed, and the general who distinguished himself most in the struggle was Ezbek, after whom the largest and finest square in Cairo is called Ezbekeeyeh. This eminent man had also been brought into Cairo as a slave, but had been capable of raising himself to high dignities and great possessions. A part of what is now the Ezbekeeyeh Square was acquired by him as a place where he could break in his camels. At an earlier period it had been the site of handsome houses and blooming gardens, which, when he took possession of it, lay in

SPOUSE OF THE SULTAN ON HER WAY TO THE COUNTRY RESIDENCE.

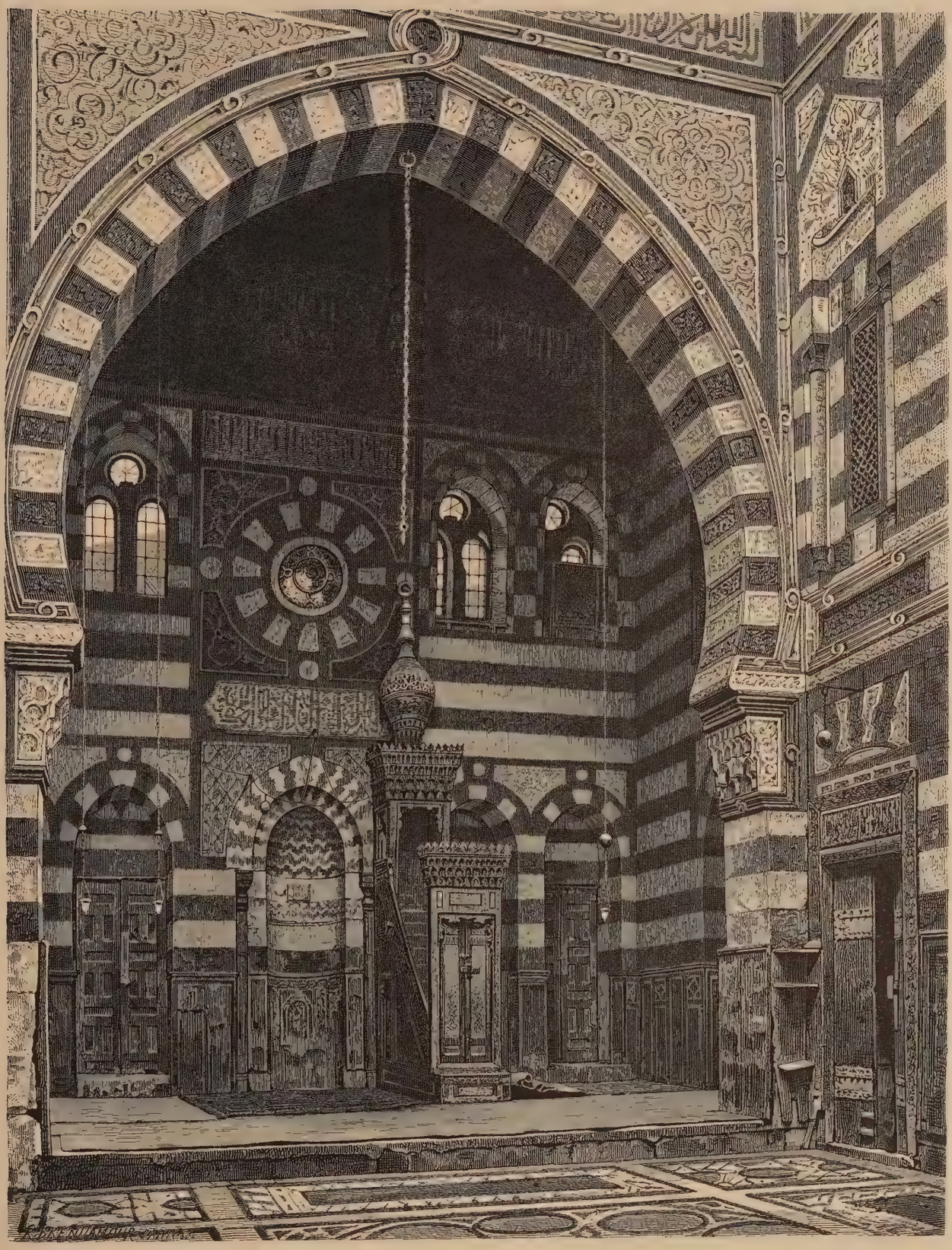
deserted ruins. Ezbek began by restoring the canal, the neglect of which had brought this quarter of the city to ruin; he then caused the land to be cleared of ruins and rubbish, and fine buildings to be erected on one side of it. Soon after other wealthy men followed his example, and at last it became the fashion to have a house in the Ezbekeeyeh. The beautiful mosque which bears his name is a worthy monument of the remarkable man in whose honour it was built, and its rich and tasteful decoration is highly praised by the admirers of Arab art. Even the school attached to it is a very remarkable structure. The Ezbekeeyeh Square has survived many vicissitudes, and now it is known throughout the world as the brilliant and splendid centre of Frank society in Cairo. The visitor at the present day sees a handsome public garden in the midst, and passes by a well-kept road leading to the capital hotels, fine public buildings and private houses which surround it on every side, and which are full of all the luxuries of European capitals; and he will find it difficult to realise that so late as in the year 1827 the trustworthy Prokesch von Osten spoke of it as being for half the year under water, and for the other half tilled as a field. Most of the buildings on this celebrated site were destroyed or dilapidated; those that remained were for the most part of Moorish style, and "bore traces of their ancient splendour." At this day it would be difficult to find even one stone of the Mameluke period. We shall take occasion presently to show the reader what Ismail Pacha made of this spot.



AN ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL FROM THE SCHOOL OF THE MOSQUE OF EZBEK.

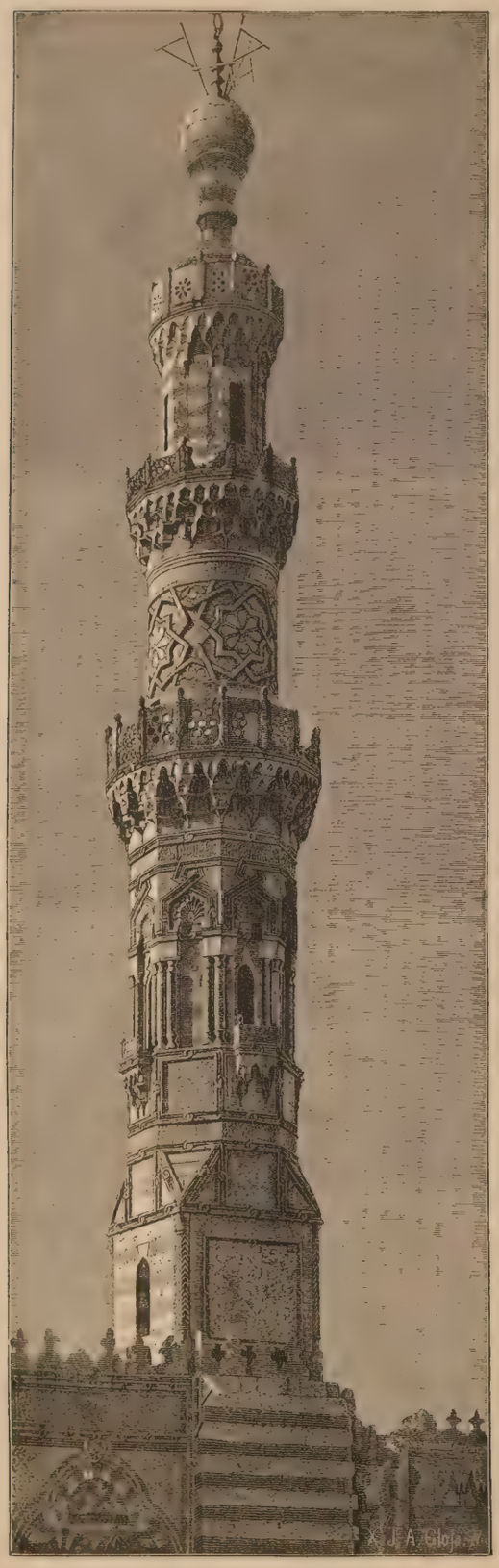
Kayt Bey died at the ripe age of eighty-five,[1] having been compelled in his last hours to abdicate in favour of his son, aged fourteen, and he was buried in the beautiful mosque-tomb which, according to custom, he had caused to be erected while he still "walked in the land of the living," and which, again, is one of the "tombs of the Khalifs." The visitor to this splendid building, on leaving the city passes

[1] He abdicated A.D. 1496.



INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE OF EZBEK.

by another fine structure known as the Okella (a corruption of *Wakkáleh*) of Kayt Bey, which was also built by that Sultan. Such Okellas or Khans existed in great numbers in Cairo, as in most of the cities of the East. They served, and still serve, as hostelries for the merchants, as well for the accommodation and safe keeping of their wares, and consist of a court surrounded by buildings, of which the lower storey forms a vaulted warehouse, while the upper rooms are used as living or store rooms. Most of these Okellas — Lane says there must be above two hundred in Cairo—are named after their founders, who built them for the benefit of the public, as protectors of commerce and benefactors to the merchant class. The entrance is through a gateway, which is closed at night, and is often finely decorated with ornaments on the key-stone. This is the case in the gateway of the Okella of Kayt Bey, and it is unfortunate that it should have been so much injured, for he had eminent architects and sculptors at his command. This is abundantly proved, in the first place, by the mosque-tomb we have mentioned, which every one who has seen it must remember with admiring wonder, and which Coste, one of the most distinguished connoisseurs of Arab art in Egypt, declared to be the most beautiful building of the kind in Cairo. How beautiful is the cupola, covered with a net-work of ribbon ornament that covers it like a stone lace-work! How elegant are the form and decorations of the minaret, how characteristic the entrance! Up to this we are led by an ante-chamber surrounded by walls crowned with little pinnacles, and which seems to have been used in the time of the Sultan—as similar chambers were in other mosques — for ceremonious receptions of distinguished guests, or for solemn audiences and judgments. In the niche of the doorway there is, on each side, a stone seat, over which carpets were spread on such occasions, and on which personages of rank were seated. In the background stood the throne for the Sultan, led up to by steps. Those who wished to approach him had to pass



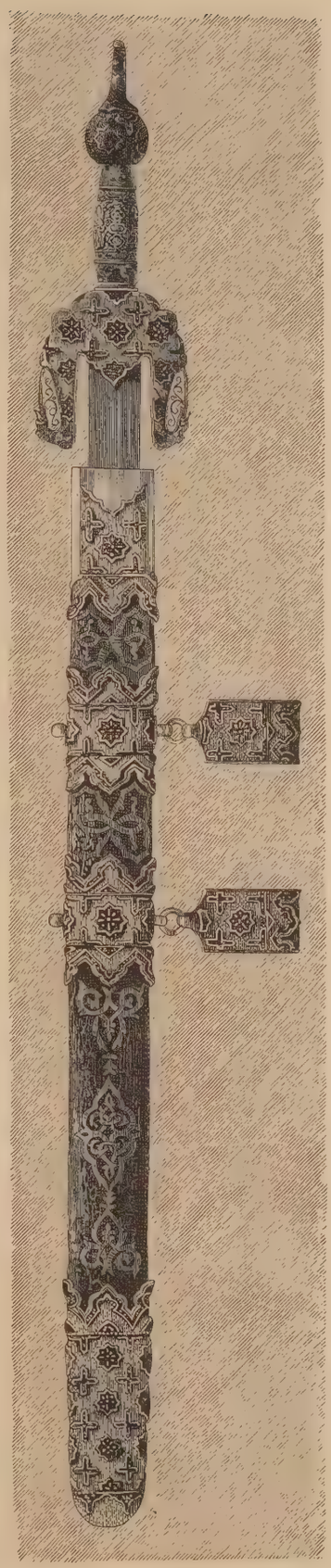
MINARET OF THE MOSQUE OF KAYT BEY.

through a double row of Mamelukes in brilliant array of arms.

The architectural arrangement of this mosque resembles in most respects that of Sultan Hasan's, but the roof of the central court was quite peculiar, with a lantern of pierced wood, which admitted the air and the softened light of day. The grand proportions of the inner room have a particularly harmonious effect, and make this place a singularly soothing and pleasant spot, which we are ready to visit a second and third time and to indulge ourselves in gazing at the noble forms of the arches and vaulting, the finish of the carving, and the fanciful grace of the flat surface ornament, which even here excludes every kind of high or round relief. It is rare to find a worshipper kneeling on the broken marble pavement, and if by chance a Cairene has found his way here it is to worship certain blocks of granite encased in an ugly cover; of these the grey one shows the impression of both the Prophet's feet, and the red one the mark of one only. Kayt Bey himself brought these with him from Mecca; he loved to travel and to undertake long hunting expeditions, and besides his pilgrimage to Mecca, he afterwards visited Hebron and Jerusalem. We are told that on his return from Arabia and Cairo he was received with great pomp. At Matareeyeh, the Atabeg Ezbek—the builder of the Ezbekeeyeh square—gave him a grand banquet, and when he entered his capital he found the streets adorned with silken hangings, and richly decorated. Singers, male and female, joined the procession, singing songs of triumph, and when he reached the citadel he was received there by the very same Ameers who, nine years later, forced him, as an old man, to abdicate in favour of his son.

ORNAMENTS OF THE MOSQUE AND TOMB OF KAYT BEY.

Under both the series of Mameluke Sultans the crown of Egypt was either clutched by bold usurpers or given by the ambitious nobles to children under age,



ARAB SWORD OF CEREMONY.

INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE AND TOMB OF KAYT BEY.

but descended from a former sovereign. It always devolved on the phantom-Khalifs of the Abbaside family to authorise and proclaim the new sovereign.

Kayt Bey's son Mohammed was born in his father's seventy-second year, and his mother was a Circassian slave. In a reign of only three years he made himself infamous by his cruelty and his unbridled licentiousness. The few instances of his personal courage and of his generous liberality sink into the shade by the side of his numberless shameless deeds. Whoever he might meet in his nightly prowls through the city was beaten, mutilated, or beheaded. For whole nights he would float on the Nile with singers of both sexes ; with his boon companions and black

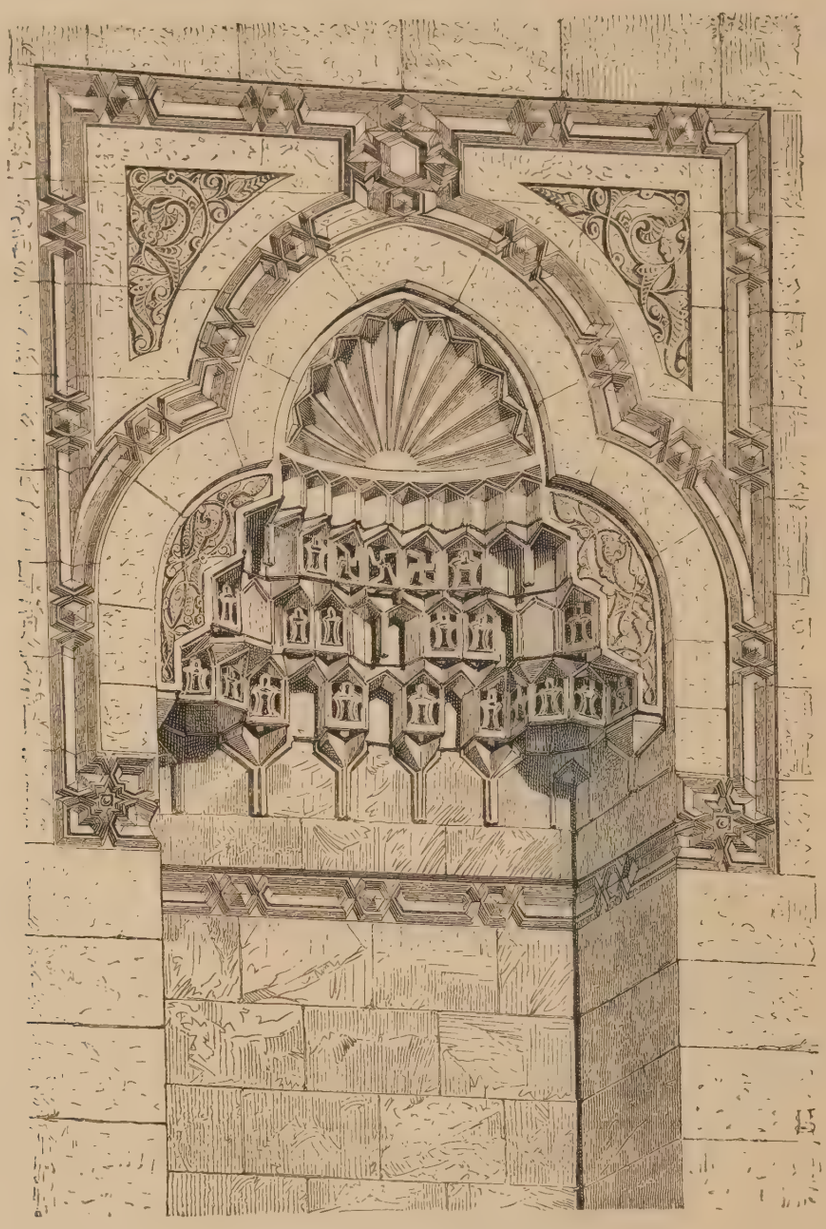
THE SULTAN'S FAVOURITE SONGSTRESS.

slaves he would force his way into private houses, and carry off the fairest women from their owners ; and, in order that he might have light enough for his nocturnal expeditions, the shopkeepers were obliged to light up their shops with lanterns. On one of these excursions he was attacked by a troop of Ameers and Mamelukes, who had conspired against him ; they killed him, and left his body lying in the street, but it was subsequently interred by his uncle and successor.

Once more within six years the throne of Egypt changed its owner four times till at length Khansooweh el Ghooree—formerly a slave of Kayt Bey's—succeeded in occupying it for fifteen years.[1] This old man—he was sixty years old when he

[1] A.D. 1501—1516 ; he died of apoplexy, or was killed in the battle of Dabik, north of Aleppo, and his head carried as a trophy to the victorious Selim I.

took possession of the throne—was descended from a royal house, and many noble qualities may be attributed to him; there are, too, in Cairo, many splendid monuments of his time. It is true he had to oppress the people with new and scarcely endurable taxes in order to maintain his repute as a builder in "the



PORTAL OF THE MOSQUE EL GHOOREEYEH.

grand style." Besides many other sanctuaries, he was the founder of the beautiful mosque named after him, in the street El Ghooreeyeh, and of the fountain and school opposite to it. He had many new cisterns and caravanserais constructed on the pilgrims' road to Mecca; he built round the citadel of Cairo, and at its foot he laid out a beautiful garden, with trees and flowers that he had introduced from Syria.

His dress and weapons were always most choice and valuable, his horse's harness was as elegant as it was costly, and he always fed off gold plate.

The sons of Nasir had heaped treasures on Aufak, the most beautiful and famous singer of her time. This remarkable woman was the mistress of these three Sultans in succession; and the pearls and jewels with which the royal brothers decked her turban are said to have been worth 100,000 dirhem—about £2,800. Khansooweh el Ghooree was equally open-handed to singers, male and female, and not to singers only, but to musicians and poets also. Tale-tellers were always allowed free access to him. What period, indeed, and what country, could be better fitted to prompt their imagination to new creations than these, where the fate and history of great and small alike changed from day to day with the unexpected rapidity and variety of a kaleidoscope? The prince of yesterday, to-day was lying in the dust; and a boy whom men had known as a slave, to-morrow might be a ruling potentate, disposing of inexhaustible treasures. A lucky speculation in trade, or a service rendered to the Sultan, might raise the poor to wealth; or a well-to-do citizen might turn to a beggar in a twinkling, if this were the pleasure of some great man. The marvels of India, of the palaces of Persia, nay, even of distant Cathay, were familiar—and not from books alone, since every day sailors and travellers, merchants and slaves, brought fresh stories of these remote countries to the capital of the Mameluke Sultans.

ORNAMENT OF THE MIMBAR OF THE MOSQUE OF EL GHOOREEYEH.

All that greed or luxury could dream—of earthly possessions, of sensual delights, of splendour and favour—was within the reach of a happy few in almost superabundance, and he who would outvie these actualities, in tale or song, could but borrow from the region of romance. And the oppressed and wretched people—crushed, taxed, and denuded—were always thirsting for these marvellous tales, which lifted them from their dull and squalid surroundings into the realms of light that were opened to their gaze by the story-teller. Why should not good-hap and riches fall in some lucky hour into the lap of the poorest of the poor among them, as it had to the fortunate boy Aladdin? Pictures answering to the romantic forms of which these old legends spoke were vivid in the fancy of every Cairene, and the lively imagination and visionary spirit of the Oriental constantly re-moulded them in new forms, each more weird or more splendid than the last. The reign of Khansooweh el Ghooree was the very flowering-time of Oriental romance, and there can be no doubt that the stories of the "Thousand and one Nights," most of which had long been known by oral transmission, assumed a concrete form at this time or a very few years earlier.

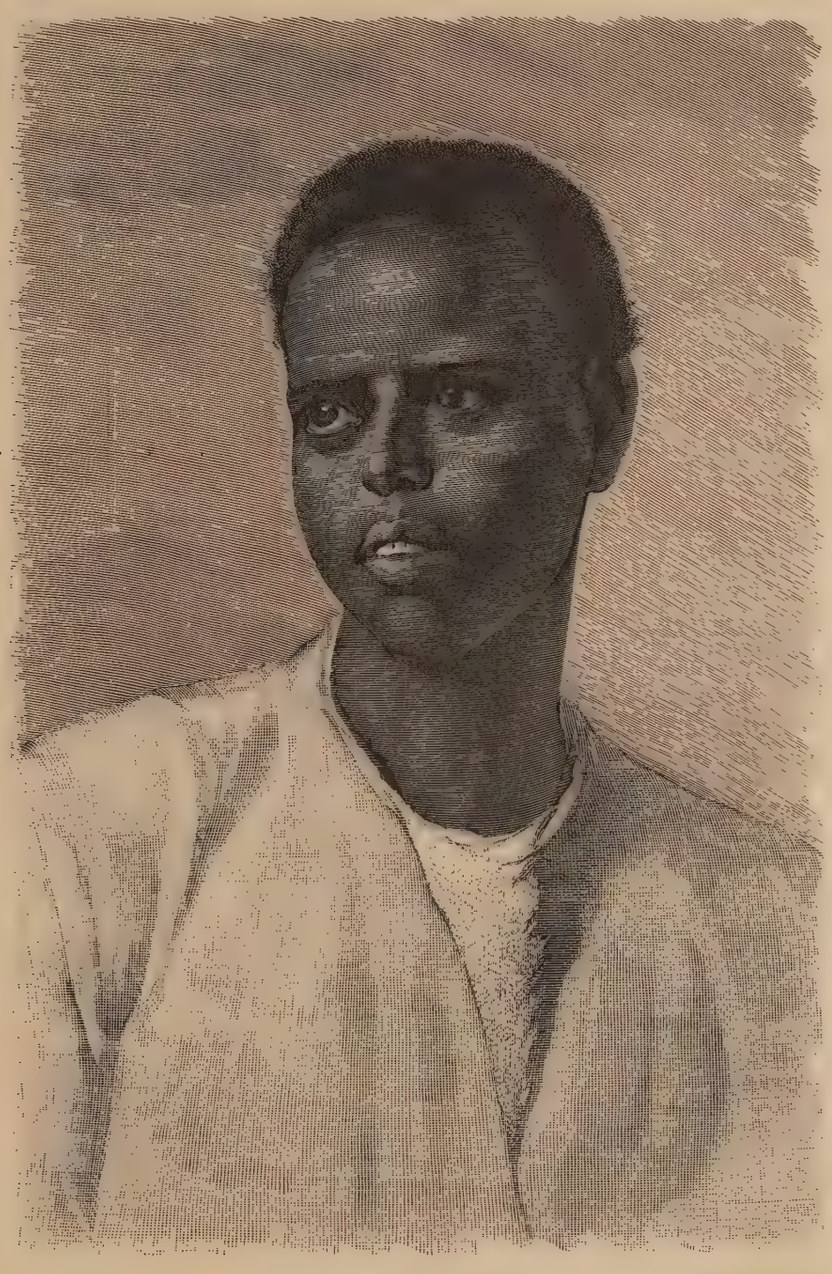
The wandering Arab had ere this beguiled his hours of repose with these tales; then they helped the townsman to forget the pinching cares of life, or served to relieve the tedium of luxurious monotony in the seclusion of the harem. The narrator was allowed to give his imagination the freest play, but the predicaments he originated he was expected to get over easily and pleasantly, and the play of his poetic fancy had to serve as a framework for deep thoughts, though suggested by pleasing images.

EASTERN STORY-TELLER.

DARB-EL-AHMAR.

like the arabesques that cover the groundwork in the national architecture. The poetry of the Moslems has, therefore, been very happily compared to their productions in the constructive arts.

Indeed, both the Eastern legend and the arabesque ornament are the unreal



A YOUNG POPULAR HERO OF TO-DAY.

offspring of fancy; and yet both must command our admiration, like everything that has reached absolute maturity and perfection within the limits of the beautiful and of its own conditions. The Arab faith admits no image, no symbol; mysticism is foreign to it, and its bald theism strictly corresponds to the naked walls of the places of worship erected in the first century of Islam. Perfectly bare of ornament, they produce

the same effect as a rocky landscape destitute of vegetation; but at an early stage an attempt was made to animate the stone, to "make it plastic," and the effort succeeded without infringing the injunctions of the faith, by the introduction of those legends in arabesque, those poems in colour with which the walls are covered, and of which a gifted traveller has said that they "looked like petrified spray." They are, in fact, a poem of lines, palms, stars, flowers, and suggestive forms, and the beholder's

MAUSOLEUM OF KANSOOWEH EL GHOOREE.

fancy yields irresistibly to their charm. Not so, however, his understanding; for he cannot but miss—in almost every building—that well-considered co-ordination of the structure and organic relation of parts which distinguish the loftier spirit of Western architecture, as well as the due proportioning of the strength of the supports to the superincumbent weight, a satisfactory treatment of the cornice, and, above all, structural solidity.[1]

[1] According to the architect, M. Jules Bourgoin, author of "Les Arts Arabes" (Paris, 1873), some interesting peculiarities in the mosques show the influence of European art, bas-reliefs of portions of the Mosque of Hasan having edifices with belfries and towers of pure Gothic style.

AN ARAB OF RANK.

The Mosque of Kansooweh el Ghooree is the last we need study as belonging to this period of the decadence of Arab-Egyptian Architecture. That it has a certain superficial splendour cannot be denied, but the details betray an unmistakable degeneracy in style. El Ghooree's Mausoleum stands among the tombs of the Khalifs—a cubical structure with an extravagantly high cupola; however, he cannot have been buried here, since he was killed in Syria, in the year 1516, in battle against the Osmanlee, and his head was carried to their Sultan Seleem, who, in the following year, put an end for ever to the independence of Egypt.

Even the Indian trade of the Arabs, to which, as we have seen, the sovereigns of Egypt had for centuries owed much of their wealth, met its death-blow under Kansooweh el Ghooree; for in 1497 Vasco de Gama sailed round the Cape of Good Hope. At Melinde, on the east coast of Africa, he met with an Arab pilot, who conducted him to the Malabar coast and into seas previously unknown to European seamen, though for several centuries Moslems had carried on there a well-regulated trade, even with China and Japan, which had borne them golden fruits. El Ghooree did not fail to understand the danger which threatened his people's interests from the Portuguese, and, encouraged by the Venetians, he dispatched a fine fleet to the Indian Seas under the command of the Kurd Ameer Huseyn. In the first encounter with the Europeans El Ghooree's admiral won a victory, though dearly bought; but in the year 1509 the great captain Francisco de Almeida succeeded in avenging the death of his son Lourenço, who had been killed in a glorious and heroic struggle against the Egyptians. He annihilated the Egyptian fleet under Huseyn, near Diu, and this victory made the Portuguese masters of the Indies, and destroyed for ever the Arab trade with Eastern countries. The new rulers of Egypt, the Osmanlee, made an attempt, it is true, somewhat later, to repossess themselves of Diu; but this entirely failed, and to this day the Turkish flag has never again waved triumphantly in Indian ports. All that was grand and pregnant, all that was beautiful and suggestive in Egypt, deteriorated, or was swept away by the Ottoman conquest. This fatal catastrophe occurred a few months after the death of Kansooweh el Ghooree, who had neglected opposing the Turks while it was yet time. He was succeeded by his former slave, Tuman Bey, to whom the Cairenes gave the surname of Melik el Ashraf, *i.e.*, most honoured king; and in the midst of misfortune he did credit to the title by his heroic conduct. On the 17th October, 1516, he mounted the throne, and by the 20th January of the following year his predecessor's conquerors were within a few miles of Cairo. A battle was fought at Heliopolis, near the Pilgrim's Lake (Birket el Hagg); one division of the Osmanlee force seized upon the Egyptian camp, a second surrounded the Mokattam and fell on Tuman Bey's army in flank. This Sultan had fought like one of the heroes of the glorious days of Islam, and he had already succeeded in penetrating with two Ameers and a picked troop of Mamelukes to the very heart of the Turkish camp, where he had taken possession of the Sultan Seleem's tent and had slain the generals he found there, when news was brought to him that his army was in full flight from the field of battle. Even the open and masked trenches in which the Egyptians had posted their artillery had fallen into the hands of the Turks, through the treason, as it proved, of two Albanian Mamelukes, who had betrayed to a Turkish

pacha—a countryman of theirs—the Egyptian Sultan's plan of battle, and had pointed out to him the trenches hidden by wattled reeds, and the position of the cannon. When the Osmanlee had succeeded in circumventing the Egyptian army it was indispensable to turn the field-pieces round; but they were old-fashioned iron mortars mounted on transoms, loaded with metal, and without wheels, so that this movement could not, in fact, be effected; while the Turks had light and movable cannon at their command. Kurt Bey, one of the bravest of Tuman's Ameers, was therefore in the right when, having been taken prisoner by the victors, he was asked by Seleem what had become of his former valour—"That," he replied, "had suffered no detriment, and it was only to their cannon that the Turks owed the victory, for with them the weakest woman might vanquish the strongest man; they were a Frankish device, of which no Moslem ought to make use in fighting against men who believed in God and the Prophet."

The Egyptian Sultan fled to Tourah while the Turks took possession of Cairo and its Citadel. Slaughter and rapine were indulged in with impunity by Seleem's soldiery, drunk with victory, till by a bold surprise and attack Tuman Bey once more made himself master of the city. He kept it but a short time; he was forced again to surrender it to the enemy, and then obliged once more to make an attempt to save the independence of Egypt by a pitched battle. For a whole day he fought at Ghizeh with a contempt of death worthy to be commemorated; next day, however, he was deserted by his flying troops, and, being betrayed by Bedaween, he was seized and dragged a captive to Seleem. After being kept a prisoner for seventeen days, he was hanged at the Gate ez-Zuweyleh to an iron hook which is still shown there.[1]

This was the end of the Mameluke rule and the beginning of Turkish supremacy in Egypt.

Muta Wakkil, the last of the pseudo-Khalifs of the Abbaside race, escaped with his life when he had solemnly made over all his dignities and rights to the Ottoman princes. He is said to have left two sons, but they died unknown and ignored. The Abbasides died out slowly and silently like tinder feebly smouldering out: the dynasty of the Mameluke Sultans ended like the wild flare of a torch that is suddenly extinguished by a stormy gust.

[1] The 13th of February, A.D. 1517.

DERVISHES AND OTHER STRANGE DEVOTEES.

CAIRO

IN ITS DECADENCE; AND ITS TOMBS.

AND so henceforward Egypt was a province of the Ottoman Empire; governors sent from Constantinople resided in the city of Cairo, and a Turkish general occupied its citadel. Both these officials were to be assisted and supported by a state-council composed of officers, learned men, and distinguished Mamelukes; and in order to prevent any governor of the Nile valley from winning the suffrages of the inhabitants, each was nominated for one year only—a time so short that the occupant of the office was forced to devote himself with breathless haste to the performance of the only task to which any one of them applied himself with any zeal, that, namely, of enriching himself before the expiration of his tenure. Then the recalled ruler returned to Constantinople with the booty he had secured, and thither also were conveyed all the revenues which the state officials were

unable to divert into their own pockets.[1] But the most abundant source of wealth could not but be dried up by this shameless rapine. Under the Mameluke princes commerce had brought gold in abundance into Egypt, and the reckless *parvenu* princes had made haste to return the gold they had extorted into the hands from which they had snatched it; but under the Turkish rule the wealth they wrung from Egypt was altogether lost to the country, and fell into the hands of the oppressor and foreigner. Dearth and misery fell upon the wealth-creating Nile,

BEFORE THE WALLS OF MASR-EL-KAHIRA.

and the condition of the country was not improved when its government passed out of the hands of the Turkish Governors—whose Sultans grew weaker and weaker—into those of the twenty-four captains (or beys) of the troops and their Mamelukes, who ruled arbitrarily in the provinces, and allowed the pacha from Constantinople no privilege whatever but that of receiving their annual tribute.

These new tyrants chose a leader from among themselves—the Sheykh el Beled,

[1] The new Government consisted of (1) The Pacha, who received the orders of the Sultan and promulgated them. (2) Six Military Corps, the chiefs of which formed the divan of the Pacha, whom they controlled and watched, and could denounce, if necessary, to Constantinople. (3) Twelve Mameluke Beys, chosen annually, but re-eligible, charged with the twelve divisions of Egypt. This form of government resembled the eikosarchy, or Government of Twenty, subsequently reduced to twelve, the dodekarchy, under the Assyrians, B.C. 620.

or "Lord of the Land"—and, as there were always several beys who laid claim to this dignity, endless bloody quarrels arose, of which the scene was usually laid in the streets of Cairo. At last, towards the middle of the last century, Alee Bey, a man of character and talent, became the Sheykh el Beled, and succeeded in acquiring the dominion over Egypt. He diminished the troops of Janissaries, increased the number of his Mamelukes, and ventured, when he had secured the support of the people, to send the governing pacha back to Constantinople. He laughed to scorn the sentence of death declared against him by the Porte, and, in 1771, caused himself to be proclaimed Sultan of Egypt by the

THE RUINED MOSQUE OF IBN-TULOON.

Shereef of Mecca. He would have made himself master of Syria had he not been betrayed by the basest treachery into the hands of his enemies, and then killed. After his death, the three Beys Ismail, Murad, and Ibraheem fought for supremacy; but, although the Porte favoured the last of these three, the two others presently succeeded in taking possession of the Nile valley and of its capital, and subsequently earned a great name by defending Egypt against the French under Buonaparte. Cairo owes no added splendour to this period. Her old glory under the Khalifs has paled; a home had been found by the Nile for a high and characteristic form of culture, but all that was fairest and noblest in it has fallen into decline and ruin; and it is on the Turks, and on the misrule of their governors that the chief blame must be laid. They dug the grave, so to speak, of its ancient splendour, and, as we recall their deeds, we cannot forbear asking—How is it that even now, when so much is being done for the improvement of the Khedive's

residence, so much of Cairo lies in ruins ; that even the noblest buildings of the time of the Khalifs are hastening to utter destruction ; while, outside the walls, ruins lie piled on ruins, and at her very gates—amid the wreck of noble monuments on one hand, and gay pleasure-houses on the other—the vultures and wild dogs gorge themselves on the loathsome carrion of dead beasts ?

In the first instance, no doubt, we must ascribe this decadence to political causes, for before the invasion of Egypt by the French, and ere the Government of Mohammed Ali brought about better times for the country, the rulers, as we have seen, had been for three centuries incessantly striving to make money out of it, and never either to preserve what was old or to create anything new. But this will not account for the decay of these monuments in later and better times ; and Ignaz Goldziher, the man of all others most competent on all Oriental questions at the present day, with whom I have gravely discussed this matter, shows convincingly in an essay (not yet published, but which he has placed at my disposal) that it is the very character of the Egyptian people, their total lack of the spirit of historical continuity, which is mainly instrumental in the destruction of the noblest secular and religious buildings, seconded by the careless constructive architecture of the builders of the time of the Khalifs.

He endeavours in the first place to clear the Cairenes from the accusation of a lack of religious fervour, to which many writers have ascribed their neglect of some of their noblest places of worship. He was as much surprised as I was at the number of ruined mosques which we meet with at every step, and which, nevertheless, served for the offices of a religion which is still living and flourishing under their walls ; a religion which constitutes and contains the alpha and omega, the source, sum, and essence of all the spiritual vitality of which Moslem Egypt is capable. Wherever the eye turns, it sees the annihilation of abandoned mosques, medresehs, and tombs of saints—buildings famous in the history which records their origin and splendour—while their very ruins testify to their former magnificence and beauty. But all this destruction cannot be laid to the charge of religious indifference as attributed to the Moslems of Egypt, for the breast of the Mohammedan certainly never swells with greater pride than under the consciousness of the abundant well of religious feeling and theological science which flows in Cairo ; and in this respect Cairo, the capital and heart of Mohammedanism in its decadence, may boldly hold her own against any city of the East, ancient or modern. The Cairene is religious ; he is a Moslem, and a pious Moslem, and thoroughly devoted to Islam ; but Mohammed himself declared, "Islam is not a monkish system," and the very word Islam signifies "devotion to God," and conveys no idea of ascetic mortification. For once that an Egyptian Moslem thinks of the "apparatus of terror" of the Koran, or shudders at its grim and elaborate delineations of the pains of hell, he triumphs a hundred times in his hopes of Paradise with its endless delights. Gloomy views are foreign to his nature, which strives in everything to see the brightest side. His religion allows him many worldly pleasures, and he enjoys them with greedy sensuality and fickle taste. An old Arab writer, comparing the physical and spiritual characteristics of the Cairenes, described them with justice as being as changeable as the

weather-cock, and licentious to the utmost degree ; so that it is difficult for a Christian, who sees their worldly mode of life, their facility of temper—verging on frivolity, their views of life, and their clinging to the world, to believe in the religious feeling which nevertheless is never lost unless by the most reprobate.

ARAB FAMILY AMONG THE RUINS.

Their rapid changes of mood—a peculiarity which they share with other nations in whose veins the blood is much mixed—and their inconstancy, which they have inherited from their nomad ancestry, must be considered in the second place as contributing to explain the carelessness with which the Cairenes originally set to work in the erection of their ancient buildings, and with which they abandon them to decay. Works of such strength as to be calculated to endure to all eternity, like those of the Pharaohs, they never even thought of. All that they built bore the stamp of evanescence and change ; it would seem as though they had never quite forgotten the tent of their forefathers — a dwelling quickly set up and as quickly removed. Very rarely, even in the time of the Khalifs, was there such care exercised in the choice of the materials or the construction of the buildings as in the works of the ancient Egyptians. The love of luxury and splendour, the airy fancy and frivolous vivacity of the Egyptian middle-ages have taken tangible form in numberless ill-founded edifices covered over with the richest play of lines and splendour of colour. "They are marvels in their own way, these Moslem tombs and mosques of Cairo," wrote a French essayist ; "their plan, as it lies upon

paper, is projected with an astonishing genius for art, and when they stood completed they were for a few score of years as bewitching as a painted and rouged beauty can be; but at the present time they are no more than squalid ruins—heaps of beams, rafters, and lumps of plaster which betray at once the instability and superficial character of the builders." This judgment is too severe, but it cannot be denied that the only well-preserved buildings of the Arabs are those of which the original foundations were not laid in the service of Islam, or else in which the influence of foreign art is to be traced. They were Byzantines who built the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople; the chief mosque in Damascus grew out of the church of St. John; the pillars in the mosque of Amroo were stolen from heathen and Christian temples; the sanctuary of Ibn-Tuloon was built by a Greek; and Italian influence is unmistakable in that of Hasan. One of those portions of this structure which were truly Arabic fell in, as we have seen, soon after it was built, and the melancholy fate of part of the mosque of Mo'ayyad, shortly after its erection, has also been told.

More spirited descriptions of buildings, fresh in all the splendour and charm of recent completion, than those given by the Arabic historians and poets are nowhere to be found; but, strange to say, the Moslem, though enjoined by his religion to fix his inward eye on all that is lofty and sublime, has no feeling for the monuments of a former age, and includes them all under the one denomination of "Kufree," that is to say "heathenish." They arouse in him neither sympathy nor admiration; nay, he is so absolutely indifferent to them that he does not even despise them. In the historical literature of the Arabs that refers to Egypt—particularly in the classical works of Makreezee and Abd-al Lateef—the Pyramids, the Sphinx, and other monuments are mentioned and described; but these authors are read only by a few, and any interest in the monuments of Egyptian antiquity finds no place among the feelings of the pious Mohammedan populace. It may be confidently declared that there are not in all Cairo a thousand Moslems who, in the whole course of their lives, ever took a single donkey-ride to Ghizeh to see the Pyramids and Sphinx; and we shall have to speak of great and beautiful monuments in Upper Egypt which have been carried away piecemeal and burnt in lime-kilns, or built into the foundations of manufactories and palaces.[1] An intelligent traveller, a Mohammedan of Damascus—one of the "illuminated" Theosophists of his time — about 170 years ago made a pilgrimage to Mecca through Palestine, Egypt, and Arabia, spent some weeks in Cairo, and left not a grave of a walee (or saint), inside or outside the city, unvisited and undescribed; but of the Pyramids, and of the impression they left on his really susceptible apprehension, we find no word. Even the Mohammedan landowner who makes a voyage down the Nile in his dahabeeyeh (Nile-boat) to inspect his estates will rarely or never be at the trouble to take a ride into the country to contemplate those "pillars of eternity" which are the goal of so many inquiring pilgrims from the West; and if by chance some ruins of antiquity catch his eye, he vouchsafes no more than a passing glance at these wondrous objects, and calls the fleeting impression he receives from them a mere "fantasy."

[1] Gliddon: "Appeal on Destruction of Monuments," London, 1841.

TOMBS OF THE KHALIFS.

The Oriental is not conservative: he is utilitarian in the strictest sense of the word; hence antiquity, even when it bears the stamp of grandeur, does not appeal to his sympathies unless it is of some obvious utility. The artistic merits or historical associations of a monument in no way justify its existence in his eyes. The first condition he requires is that it should be applicable to some purpose; in short—and this tells and explains the whole matter—he is devoid of the historic spirit which begets all our pleasure in preserving the relics of the past, and which is the source of all sound culture in the present.

Certainly there is no lack of good historians among the Arabs, and even the philosophy of history has been worthily treated of in their literature; but the faculty and the endeavour which the European regards as lying at the root of all deeper and higher culture — the effort to apprehend the present as the child of the past, and to discern its features through every phase of its development — this endeavour and this spirit are foreign to the Oriental, and he therefore feels no pang when the monuments of the past are destroyed and their very memory is recklessly erased from the great book of life. He loves "stories" indeed; they amuse his fancy and excite his interest, which is indefatigably receptive of facts — whether real or invented is all one to him; but "history" as we conceive of it, and cultivate it in order to elevate our minds and train our energies, is unknown to the Oriental as a means of education. In former times el-Fahree was the only historian who insisted on that the young should be introduced to the study of history; he wrote the history of the Khalifs, having lived during the period of their extinction by the Mongols; and his works, which were and are still unknown to the Orientals themselves, have lately been rescued from oblivion by the industry of German research.[1] Recently, however, the reformers of education in modern Egypt have bestirred themselves to cultivate historical literature and to make students acquainted with history. These praiseworthy efforts cannot fail of exercising a beneficial effect on the mental and general progress of future generations; but that now living is unfortunately devoid, as we have seen, of any such impulse of reverence as would result in the preservation of ancient buildings. These children of the present—to whom the future is in the hands of God and independent of their volition, and to whom

[1] Translated by W. Ahlwerdt, Gotha, 1860.

the past is a thing unknown—do not actually labour to destroy what exists, but they feel no call to preserve it, and the decay of those ancient sanctuaries causes them no regret. That which has no practical utility deserves, as it seems to them, to perish; and it would appear as though that conservative spirit which was natural to the ancient Egyptians, and their passionate adhesion to the *status quo*, had been entirely lost to their posterity by the admixture of foreign blood. They prefer to build something new that offers fresh food for the eye, and they abandon the decrepit to its fate. Unfortunately, ever since the conquest of Egypt by the Turks all that they have built is devoid, not only of solidity, but of that fine feeling for art which we everywhere meet with among the most ruinous remains of the architecture of the Khalifs. And it is even a subject for rejoicing that in these times of decadence the renewal of the old buildings has been neglected, since the only attempt that has been made in that direction has turned out most lamentably. The mosques of Cairo were usually built of alternate courses of red and of yellowish-white stone, a favourite method even in western architecture and particularly in Tuscany. As the red colour was somewhat faded, on the occasion of the opening of the Suez Canal all the old mosques were painted in honour of the Khedive's guests with a colour which is certainly anything rather than pale. The task of restoring the stately old mosques and minarets was handed over to the house-painter, and his unskilled hand has daubed the walls with vulgar ruddle and glaring yellow; and now their jack-pudding pattern of stripes disgraces the noble monuments, whose builders took the utmost care in the application of their colours that they should be soft and subdued. The structures of the Turkish period are ungraceful in form, overloaded with massive ornament, and painted with tasteless gaudiness; but they will not long vex the cultivated eye, for, above everything, they are built, not for permanence, but for the passing hour—which makes what use it can of them; and posterity, which was never once thought of by those who built them, will revenge itself by forgetting them.

FRAGMENTS OF A COLUMN.

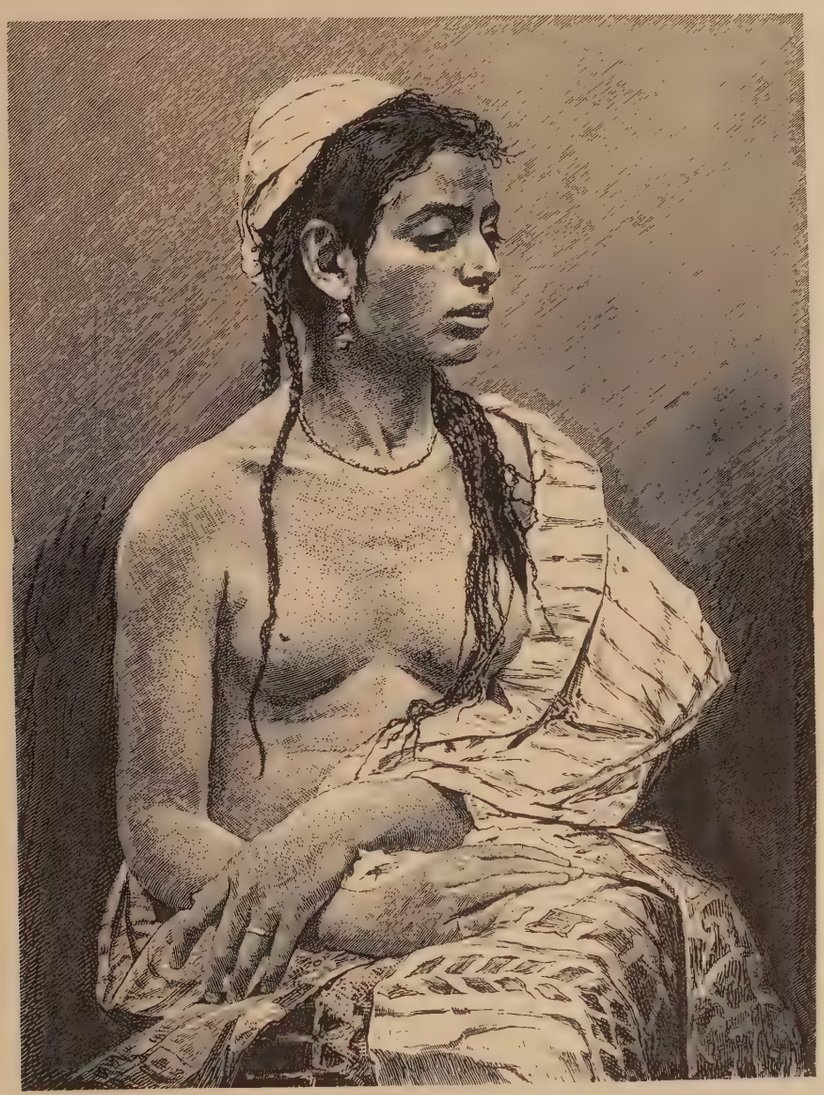
The caprice and laxity which are displayed by Orientals in their works of art are reflected in their political history. Dynasties and reigning sovereigns change with surprising rapidity, and where in the annals of modern Oriental history shall we find long lines of kings like those of antiquity or of Europe?

Time, which hurls its mighty avalanche down upon all things and buries them in its inexorable advance—dahher, "revolving time," or, as the Arabs also call

it, "the passing of the nights"—time destroys all things. This melancholy truth is nowhere truer, nowhere more forcibly felt, than in the East—

"Know, oh soul, that all that is not Allah must pass away."

Thus runs a verse which was declaimed by the heathen Arab Lebeed, and which earned him the honour of admission into the ranks of the poets of Islam,[1] to which



HAMIDA, A CAIRENE MAIDEN.

in his last years he became a convert. The writers of history even, in the artificial and laboured prefaces to their works, enlarge not on the Eternal, which is mirrored in the fates of nations, but only on the Transitory, which strikes them as they contemplate all earthly things.

The mythological instincts of the people prompt them, as we often have seen, to connect miracles and legends with sacred buildings and relics, and these usually

[1] Lived in the time of Mohammed.

survive as long as the objects of their reverence. If the relics are lost, or the buildings fall into decay, the legend vanishes from the memory of the people, acquires new meanings, and is at last completely lost, for myths and legends demand local circumstance and fostering. Many legends, therefore, have disappeared with the ancient buildings; still not a few have been preserved, but they are for the most part so monstrous and unmeaning that the repetition of them can only be endurable to those who believe in them. One of the least foolish that I am acquainted with may find a place here. Lane—who was so well acquainted with Cairene life—relates it, and connects it with the Gate of Ez Zuweyleh or el Mutawelee, of which I have spoken, and which is believed to work miracles and is regarded as a haunt of the mysterious chief of all the Walees or saints.

A certain pious shopkeeper felt an ardent longing to be enrolled in this venerable company, and to that end he went to a man who was universally esteemed as holy, to beg him to procure him an interview with the Kutb. After all sorts of tests this was promised him, and he was commanded to go to the above-mentioned gate and to address himself to the first person he might see coming out of the neighbouring mosque of el Mo'ayyad. The merchant obeyed, and he was, in fact, met by the Kutb in the form of a dignified old man, who granted his prayer and ordered him to take the district south-west of the Zuweyleh Gate under his protection, with the street called Darb el Ahmar. Immediately the merchant felt that he had become a Walee, and perceived that he had insight into things hidden from other mortals. When he reached the district entrusted to him he saw a man selling cooked beans out of a large pot to the passers-by; the newly-made saint took a stone, struck the pot over with it, and submitted without a murmur to a severe thrashing for the deed. When the bean-seller's rage was somewhat moderated and he set to work to gather up the shards of his broken pot, he found a poisonous snake among the pieces; then he perceived with repentance that he had beaten a Walee who had interfered to prevent his selling food that would have poisoned his customers. The next day the poor saint limped round his district with swollen limbs, and, without thinking of the blows he had received a few hours before, he flung over a large jar of milk which was offered for sale at a stall. Again he was severely beaten by the owner, but the passers-by held the milk-seller back, remembering what had happened the day before. When they searched among the fragments of the milk-jar they found a dead dog at the bottom. On the third day the Walee dragged himself again to the Darb el Ahmar, but painfully, for he was sorely beaten. Here he met a servant carrying a tray on his head, with delicacies and fruit intended for a feast in a country-house. The saint immediately put his stick between the man's feet, so that he fell down and all the contents of the saucers were spilt in the street. The servant flew on him in a fury, and gave him as severe a taste of the stick as he himself expected to get from his master for his clumsiness. Meanwhile the dogs fell upon the cates that lay in the roadway, and within a few minutes of the first mouthfuls they lay dead. This proved to the bystanders that the food that had been spilt was poisoned, and they earnestly implored the saint's forgiveness. The pious man rubbed his severely beaten shoulders, said to himself that it was not worth while to see things that were hidden from other

TOMB OF A SHEYKH ON THE ISLAND OF RODA.

mortals, and prayed to God and the Kutb to remove from him the burden of sanctity and to restore him to his former ignorance and humble condition. Heaven granted his prayer, and, as a shopkeeper, he escaped the beatings he had received as a Walee.[1]

It is related of the saint commonly known as "Iron Stone," who is said to have been the Mameluke of Sultan Kayt Bey, that his master sent him to a venerable sheykh to offer him a rich gift in gold. The Walee at first refused the offering, but presently accepted it, pressed the coin between his hands, in which it instantly turned to blood, and said, "See my son, this is your gold." The Mameluke was staggered; he remained with the Walee as his disciple, founded an order of Dervishes, and is to this day reverenced as a saint at Cairo; more than one legend is connected with his tomb.

TOMB OF IBRAHEEM AGA.

Particular powers are ascribed to various relics, but they are also attributed to certain buildings, as, for instance, to a certain mosque which is still called "Gam'a el-benat," *i.e.*, the mosque of the daughters. This, it is believed, has the gift of assisting girls who have remained unmarried to get a husband. Every Friday the true believers assemble in this mosque, as in all the others, to pray and hear sermons. If a maiden, who, in spite of the efforts of her relatives, has not succeeded in being chosen as the mistress of any harem, desires to obtain a husband, tradition prescribes the following mode of procedure: She must go on a Friday to mid-day prayer—the most solemn service in the whole week—in the Mosque of the Daughters. When the believers prostrate themselves for the first time at the cry of the Imam, "Allah akbar" (Allah is great), and while their foreheads touch the reed mats on the floor of the mosque, she must walk once up and down the space dividing two ranks of worshippers; then, beyond a doubt, within a year it shall be her lot to know the joys of married life by the side of a good husband.

Most of the pious legends are associated with the tombs of saints which, like the saints themselves, are called Walees. A great many of these may be regarded as centres of the religious life of the Cairenes, and yet the older ones are no better kept up than the other structures of the time of the Khalifs. Such walee-tombs are either found in mosques, which are named after the saints interred in them, or they are independent structures roofed with a cupola within whose narrow walls the coffin of the saint, covered with a carpet, serves as the shrine before which the devotees put up their prayers. These Kubbeh are usually erected on the spot where the holy man, whose remains they cover, is supposed to have had his anchorite's cell or Zawiyah (literally, his *corner*), and such buildings occur at every step

[1] There is a long account of the *Kutb* in Lane's "Modern Egyptians," 12mo. (1871), i. 290.

throughout the East; for great is the number of men whose tombs have become the scene of pious devotions or the centre of a crowd of superstitious and miraculous legends. A devout Moslem will never pass by such a memorial without putting up an inward prayer and a supplication that he may be received into the order of the Walees. What such a saint may be, and what idea we may form of Mohammedan sanctity, has been set before the reader in the account of the mawlid or birth-day-festival of the holy Ahmed Seyyid el-Bedawee of Tantah.

A DERVISH, IN ECSTATIC EXCITEMENT, PIERCING HIS CHEEK.

Often at night, on the way home from some distant excursion, ere reaching Cairo a monotonous chant may be heard, hardly to be called a song—a recitative in Arabic, broken from time to time by a shrill scream, wrung as it were from the labouring breast of some passionately excited worshipper in his pious ecstasy. A reverent feeling steals over the traveller, and his blood runs chill as he catches sight of the figures of the Dervishes, shrouded in the shades of night, who at this late hour are gathered round the tomb of a Walee, performing their strange evolutions and their Zikr, or mystical recitations, under the open heavens. I propose to take my readers to witness such a Zikr when I make them the spectators of the festivals of the Cairenes; but the visitor to the capital can at any time assist at these very extraordinary religious practices if he visits a Tekkeh or Dervish monastery at certain hours. These buildings commonly occupy the site of the former dwelling-place of a Walee who was in some way connected with the order to which the cloister belongs.

Every Thursday, as it grows dusk, a troop of Dervishes, in their grey sugar-loaf hats of sheepskin, proceed, lamp in hand, through the Abdeen street of Cairo, and then, to the left, through the squalid lanes of the Greek quarter. They are on their way to a tomb-mosque, rarely visited by foreigners, where they pass the whole

night by the grave of the saint in Zikr. Many even of the non-initiated take part in the pious exercises of this brotherhood, which is much run after by the people. The lower class, nay, even many of the better educated and cultivated Cairenes go

VAULTED CELLAR IN AN OLD STREET.

to the tombs of the Walees, in the first instance no doubt on account of the miraculous powers ascribed to them, and which are chiefly exercised in healing, for which reason they naturally are chiefly attractive to the sick and crippled. Under a sycamore near Cairo there stood a Kubbeh which, even in the last century, is said to have possessed the miraculous power of curing animals; for if some of the dust taken from inside it were laid on the sick or injured limb of any beast a cure

was instantly effected. The tombs of other saints are frequented because their aid is hoped for in circumstances of outward difficulty, and others again to obtain the blessing of offspring. At Za'ka, a frontier-town between Egypt and Syria, not far

MAMELUKE TOMB.

from el-Areesh, there is the grave of a Bedawee saint and sheykh named Zuweyyid, of which the gate is never closed, because it is believed that treasures preserved in it can never be stolen by any thief, and that those who seek refuge in it escape their pursuers. Nor is it only the tombs of miracle-working saints that enjoy such fame and reverence, but also those of such men as have been intimately connected

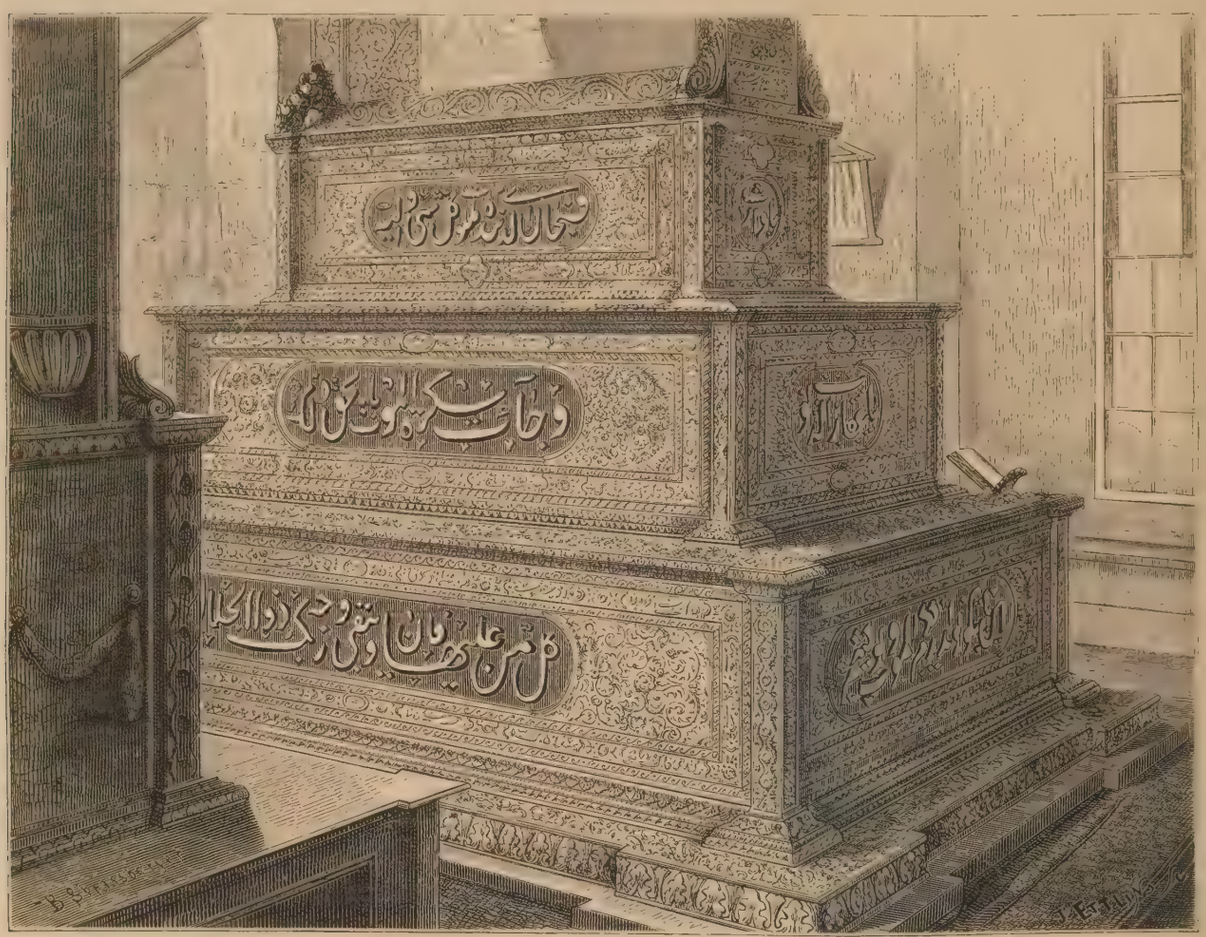
THE KARAFEH OUTSIDE CAIRO.

with the rise and growth of Islam, particularly those of the Companions of the Prophet, *i.e.*, those men who had known the Prophet himself. Among these are reckoned those warriors who came into Egypt with the great leader Amroo, and every tomb which the people persuade themselves has been erected to one of these shares the same honours as the resting-places of the Walees.

It is true that the tomb of the same "Companion" is venerated in four or five different places, and yet we never find any attempt made to clear up the contradictions that arise from this, for the tenacity with which the people cling to such traditions is very great. Most of those which survive in Egypt are connected with the hapless family of the Khalif Alee. They owe their origin to the family of the Fatimites, who, as we have shown, traced their pedigree back to Fatima, the wife of Alee and Mohammed's favourite daughter, and who made the pious city of Cairo, in which they resided, the centre of a Shi'ite dominion. Even at the present day, when Cairo is justly regarded as the focus of Sunnite learning, these traditions are firmly believed. Thus the great festival of Ashoora, which was originally Judaic and begins on the tenth day of the first Mohammedan month Moharrem, is solemnly observed as a great fast and day of repentance by those Cairenes who cherish the memory of Alee, and with mourning ceremonials that are scouted by the Sunnites, because it is the anniversary of the fall of the dynasty of Alee and of the martyrdom of Hasan and Huseyn, the two sons of Alee. The scene of these performances, which in part are perfectly theatrical, is usually the mosque of el Hasaneyn, where the head of the martyr Huseyn is said to be buried. This Huseyn is a saint highly esteemed by the Cairenes, and, their most unpleasant peculiarity being their perpetual habit of swearing, no oath is oftener in their lips than—"By the life of our master Huseyn" (Wahayat seed-na Huseyn).

The most abundant food for the tomb-worship of the Cairenes is offered them at the Karafeh, the most vast cemetery in all the East; and there, if anywhere, we may find the traces of those beliefs of the Egypt of the Pharaohs which have survived among the Moslems of the Nile valley. I have already hinted that such remains exist, when speaking of the festival of Ahmed-el-Bedawee at Tantah and of the rising of the Nile. In Cairo we are particularly reminded of ancient forms of thought by the fact—unique among the modern cities of the East—that behind the abodes of the living there lies spread a city of the dead; a place of rest full of graves and mausoleums innumerable. We saw, when considering the Necropolis of Memphis, that in the time of the Pharaohs the cities of the dead were placed to the west of the towns, and that this situation was intimately connected with their religion and mythology; and it may have happened quite accidentally that the Necropolis of Mohammedan Cairo extends as a long array of groups of tombs outside the Eastern limits of the city and across the ledge of the Mokattam. There, to the right and left of the citadel, stand those magnificent cupolaed buildings which, with their builders, I have already introduced to the reader, and at the feet of the mausoleums of the great lie immeasurable rows of graves with simple head-stones or white-washed Kubbeh. A cemetery is called a "karafeh" in the Arabic dialect spoken in Egypt; but this name originally belonged only to those particular acres of the dead that surround these tombs of the Khalifs and Mamelukes. This Karafeh, for

centuries the burying-place of the Moslem inhabitants of Cairo, is also one of the most popular resorts of the pious, whether native or foreign, who visit Cairo in order to seek out the graves of the saints and there to put up a fervent prayer. The populace of Cairo frequently make a pilgrimage to the Karafeh on a Friday, starting before sunrise, and regularly on certain holy days, particularly that of el Eed. Men, women, and children are then to be seen crowding the streets that



SARCOPHAGUS OF IBRAHEEM PACHA.

lead to the cemetery; and the city of the dead, usually so deserted and silent, is filled with gay and active life. Palm-branches are laid on the graves; dates, bread, and alms are dispensed to the poor, and the spirits of the favourite saints are appealed to in long-winded supplication. Are these devotees Moslems—believers in the one and only God—or are they not a people who worship their ancestors? In truth we can hardly blame the Wehabites[1]—those destroyers of the temples in Upper Arabia and India—when they turn their fanaticism against the tombs of the Walees,

[1] Name of a sect called also the Wahhabees, from Abd-el-Wahhab, their founder. This sect arose in the end of the eighteenth century in Arabia, and with iconoclastic zeal endeavoured to destroy the tombs of the Walees. Had the Wahhabees succeeded Mohammedanism would have taken a new departure, but they were conquered by Mehemet Ali in 1812 and deprived of Mecca and Medina.

PART OF THE HOUSE OF THE SHEYKH SADAT.

pulling them down and devastating them because they conduce to obscure the grand Monotheistic idea.

In the Karafeh beyond a doubt the all-comprehending Allah has far less honour done him than the pious dead interred there. Members of every sect may find here the resting-places of the most revered leaders of the ritual they observe. Here a mausoleum covers a sarcophagus with the mortal remains of the Imam Shafe'ee,[1] the founder of the science of the rationale of canonical law and the highly revered originator of the ritual named after him, which was the predominant one until the Turkish conquest. A perfect garland of beautiful legends has been woven round the history and person of this remarkable man by the mythological spirit of the Egyptians. Many miracles are related of his Kubbeh, of which the door, as the Cairenes believe, never opens but to a true believer and never to the reprobate in whose heart there lurks a doubt; and this miraculous peculiarity of the door which leads to the sepulchre of the pious sage is said to have unmasked many a hypocrite. A large part of the Necropolis bears the name of Shafe'ee, and here stands the mosque-tomb of the vice-regal family called the Hosh el Basha, which is visited principally by foreigners. In this stands the beautiful sarcophagus of the great general Ibrahim Pacha, father of the ex-Khedive, and there the Koran is read early and late.

Very special miraculous powers are attributed to the tomb of the famous Imam Leyth ibn Sa'd,[2] known as "the father of miracles"; the miraculous powers he exercised during his life having remained with him after death. Once upon a time—so saith the legend—one of his votaries, being in great straits, came to the kubbeh of this saint, and prayed fervently for release from his need. After he had squatted a long time, sunk in meditation and grief before the holy spot, he fell asleep, and the Imam appeared to him in a dream and said, "Be easy, pious man! when thou shalt wake, take that thou shalt find in my grave." The poor man opened his eyes, and before him sat a bird, who recited the Koran without hesitation in all the seven modes. The man took the bird, and showed it in the city, where the learned creature excited so much attention that the governor desired to possess it, and paid so high a sum for it that the man was able to pay his debts and to live free of care for the remainder of his days. But the Governor did not long rejoice in his acquisition, for the Imam appeared to him at night in a dream, and said, "Know that my soul is shut up in a cage in your house." Next morning, when the governor went to see his feathered and learned captive, it had disappeared, for the Imam had assumed the form of a bird to relieve the pious devotee in his need. I must also mention the tombs of the Sadat al-Bekreeyeh, *i.e.*, those principals of the Egyptian orders of Dervishes who descend in a direct line from the Khalif Aboo Bekr. This dignity continues to this day to enjoy the highest consideration, and the holder takes a distinguished position at many popular and religious festivals. The tombs of the Sadat al-'Alaweeyeh, *i.e.*, of the former heads of the orders derived from Alee, are also to be seen in this city of the dead. The present holder of this high office, which, however, is rarely exercised,

[1] Died at Fostât A.D. 819.

[2] Died A.D. 791.

is a rich landowner of most gracious manners, who is willing to show, to such foreigners as have a sufficient introduction, his beautiful and venerable family residence—which is, perhaps, the most characteristic dwelling come down from old times in all Cairo—his choice library full of literary treasures, and the most affable kindness withal. He has even conducted many a learned European with the utmost amiability to visit the tombs of his predecessors, where there is to be seen his extremely interesting pedigree, which goes back, ostensibly, to the time of the Moslem invasion of Egypt.

Yonder tomb, where all pause with such deep devotion and reverence, is that of the sheykh Omar ibn el-Fareed,[1] the poet of the "Wine-songs," the great hymns of mystical divine love among the Mohammedans. The poem is throughout allegorical, to be sure, and does not celebrate the material juice of the grape or its effects, but the divine afflatus and ecstacy of the Soofee who has drunk of the sweet and intoxicating spirit of God's love, and, abandoning his own identity, has become one with his celestial beloved one. By the sepulchre of Sheykh Omar verses are often recited from his poems which work up the bystanders to the highest pitch of transport, and it is often the scene of those Zikr[2] so frequently mentioned, and to which reference will again be made in a future chapter.

We have lingered long among ruins and tombs, and have given a due meed of attention to old Cairo. We will now turn to the young and flourishing capital, its residents of to-day, and the princely house that has succeeded in arresting the country in its drift towards ruin, and—with the help of foreign pilots—in guiding its course into a safer and better channel.

[1] Died A.D. 1235. Ibn Khallikan II., 338.

[2] Religious invocations accompanied by whirling and other gestures.